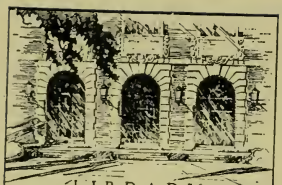

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MY DUCATS AND MY DAUGHTER

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MY DUCATS AND MY DAUGHTER

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.

LONDON
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1884

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MY DUCATS AND MY DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XXII.

VOX POPULI.

Mr. Ingleby went down from London to Scotland boiling with rage against Mr. Arden, and quoting freely from the Vindictive Psalms. He had spent two days with his nephew, arguing, pleading, expostulating—but in vain. It had been ascertained that stock to the respectable amount of £40,000 stood against Lynn's name in the register of Lone Peak shareholders. But nothing would induce Lynn to repudiate the transaction, to make the matter public, and crush "that plausible swindler" by the exposure. Mr. Ingleby could not understand it. His nephew had

assured him that he no longer aspired to be Mr. Arden's son-in-law—why, then, should any feeling of delicacy enter into the matter? Lynn told his uncle that even though the money were lost, he would still, as it appeared, have enough to live on; and that what he intended to do, in the meantime, was—nothing. There was a quiet determination in his way of saying this which made Mr. Ingleby rather afraid of his nephew. He had not suspected that Arthur was capable of so much obstinacy. It was quite evident that he meant to take his own way henceforward, right or wrong; and Mr. Ingleby, recognising this fact with sorrow, ceased from his persuasions. It was some consolation to him that Mr. Barnard the lawyer, and Mr. Ayres his co-trustee, took the same view of the matter as he did himself. It was arranged that Lynn should have an interview with these gentlemen; and Mr. Ingleby could only hope that their representations might have more weight with his nephew than his own.

Mr. Ingleby, looking back on those two

days spent with his nephew, could not regard them as at all satisfactory. After the agitation of that first interview, Lynn had not spoken to him another word of reproach. His manner, when they met next morning, had been calm and composed. He had seemed, outwardly, in the proper frame of mind for receiving good advice. But Mr. Ingleby, on proceeding to offer good advice, had very soon discovered that it would not be followed. There was, indeed, something guarded and reserved about Lynn's way of taking his counsel which he felt to be far worse than open defiance. Mr. Ingleby had to draw what comfort he could from the fact that his nephew had now broken with Miss Arden; and that he had promised to visit his relatives in Shawkirk some time after the election should be over, and his own affairs definitely arranged. Against this, however, must be set his refusal to declare open war on Mr. Arden; and his express determination to go on with his work at the *Forum* office, until another

sub-editor should be found to take his place. This latter resolve was very terrible to Mr. Ingleby. It added fuel to his wrath against Mr. Arden. It intensified his longing to be at Shawkirk; it made him grudge every minute of his absence from the scene of strife. Three clear days would be left him, wherein to strain every nerve in opposition to the man who dared to come before a Scottish constituency, after inveigling Arthur Lynn into the Lone Peak swindle, and introducing him to the infidel Mallory.

When Mr. Ingleby reached the borough, he was amazed to find his son Richard the hero of the hour. Men everywhere were talking of the 'great speech' which Dick had delivered on the previous evening, and of the powerful influence it was likely to have on the issue of the election. When Mr. Ingleby heard where this speech had been made, he was, for a time, dumb with fury. But when he learned what its tenour had been, a certain feeling of satisfaction mingled itself with his anger.

Mr. Ingleby had been in trouble of mind about his son, before his departure for London. It had seemed good to Dick to adopt a political creed of his own—and that creed was the Tory one.

"Yes, I'm going to support Elvan," he had said to his father, when sternly questioned on the subject. "You say yourself that Arden's a swindler, and as for Trotter, what's he?—a low cad in trade. Now, Elvan's a gentleman. He's got a stake in the country, and all that, you know. If I had a vote, I'd vote for him. Anyhow, I mean to help him all I can."

"Richard," Mr Ingleby had replied, "you shall do nothing of the sort. Understand clearly, once for all, that I forbid it. Your 'support' cannot, I should imagine, materially affect the reckless young nobleman you have mentioned. But I will not have you interfere in these matters at all. Neither will I permit you to speak in that way of Bailie Trotter. I do not agree with all of Bailie Trotter's views, but in the present

crisis—when we are menaced by a Lord, who, I am informed, spends his life in running races on horseback, and by a Gambler, whose political opinions are derived from an Infidel Republican in London—in the present crisis I have felt it my Duty to nominate Bailie Trotter, and to do all I can to secure his return. As for you, you had better keep close to your desk at the Works, and leave politics alone until you have acquired the rudiments of a commercial education."

This rebuke had reduced Dick to silence for the time, but had not changed his political views. And he had taken advantage of his father's absence to make public profession of his Conservatism. The Tory partisans had welcomed Dick among them, on account of the name he bore; and invited him in flattering terms to appear on the platform at one of Lord Elvan's meetings.

It was not the spell of oratory that drew a crowd to the meetings of the Conservative candidate. Lord Elvan was not eloquent.

Neither had Mr. Haig and his other mentors found it easy to imbue him with political lore. When they sought to fix in his memory the dates of the chief measures aimed in recent times against his Order, he would answer, 'Yes, that was in Favonius's year'—or, 'All right; I'll remember; Kisber's year'—dating by the Derby, as the Greeks dated by the Olympic Games. His speeches were written for him. Parts of them were very fiery and impassioned; and as Lord Elvan read on without the faintest flicker of interest or animation, the contrast between his manner and matter was curious, and in its way effective. At times he was plainly unable to decipher his MS., and this told greatly in his favour. It put the Liberal section of the audience into good-humour. It seemed to show them the sad results of hereditary Toryism. But the great attraction at Lord Elvan's meetings was the scope given for the exercise of the native wit. Whoever aspired to be a 'voice' had there his opportunity. To 'hiss a gentleman' is much; but

to 'chaff' a lord is a joy for ever. It was rapture to be able to offer the noble candidate to "tak' sax tae ane aboot the Demon" —or to inform him in a quasi-confidential manner that his colt had no chance for the Leger "against the Bell-pull." The 'heckling,' however, was but a poor affair. The touch of the Master's hand was wanting. Sandy Tennant was elsewhere, operating on Mr. Arden; for which duty he had been specially told off during the contest. Mr. M'Candlish, the Evangelical Union pastor, was allowed to be only a cold and feeble parodist of the inimitable slater. Lord Elvan, who appeared to better advantage in answering or declining to answer questions than in making speeches, contrived even to turn the laugh against the reverend gentleman.

It was at the very close of the meeting that Dick Ingleby made his memorable appearance. No one had called on him to propose a motion or to make a speech; no one knew for what object he had risen from his chair, and come to the front of the platform. Dick, apparently,

knew just as little as anyone else what he was about to say. During the last two days he had been in a state of abnormal excitement, and the champagne with which some of his new Tory friends had plied him freely that very evening, had carried the election fever to his head. The Liberals in the hall, being most of them under the impression that he was going to move an amendment on the resolution in Lord Elvan's favour, received him with laughter and applause. But Dick soon undeceived them. "Look here, I'm a Tory," he began; "proud . . . give my support to . . ." Then a burst of laughter, loud and long, broke from the audience; and a Voice made itself heard:—"Eh, laddie, what'll your faither say?"—followed by more laughter. "Don't care for that!"—cried Dick, in a voice which was audible enough, though the articulation was a little thick—"man must have his own convictions . . . can't help it . . . free country, you know"—at which point another shout of laughter drowned his words. But Dick had now got hold of a definite idea, and was manifestly

struggling to body it forth in speech. A few 'Hear, hears' from some mirthful spirits on the platform incited him to proceed. He was heard to say something about "gentleman"—"stake in the country"—"always safe to back"—"low cad in trade"—and then to utter the word "*swindler.*" This stirred up a great commotion. There were shouts of "Withdraw!"—"Speak up!"—"Gang awa' hame, man!"—"Go on!"—groans and derisive cheers. Then a voter got up excitedly in the body of the hall, and fiercely demanded to know whom Mr. Ingleby Junior was calling a "swindler." "I'll tell you that!"—shrieked Dick; and an interval of comparative silence encouraged him to make the revelation. He appealed to the audience whether they did not know his cousin, Arthur Lynn? With engaging frankness, he took them into his confidence with regard to Lynn and his affairs. He told them about Lynn's fortune, which he estimated roughly at between two and three millions sterling. The 'Shawkirk chiels,' to all of whom the name of Lynn was familiar,

listened open-mouthed and eager. But Dick's first introduction of Mr. Arden's name, in this connection, caused a renewal of the uproar. "Stop the fellow, I say"—said Lord Elvan to Mr. Macritchie, who was in the chair, and who had been following Dick's disjointed harangue with manifest interest and satisfaction.—"No, no, my Lord," expostulated Mr. Macritchie; "let him go on! This is all in your Lordship's favour, and besides, I'm sure he's telling the truth."—"That doesn't matter," said his Lordship; "stop him, all the same. This isn't fair fighting, you know."—But the audience declined to have Dick stopped. He had said enough to whet their curiosity, and intensify their thirst for further personalities. "Na, na!"—they shouted as Mr. Macritchie rose to call Dick to order—"Let him alane! Oot wi't, man! Tell us a' aboot it!"—and before the speaker could be stopped, he had conveyed to the minds of his hearers a distinct impression that the Liberal candidate had done something 'shady,' in connection with Arthur Lynn's newly-inherited wealth. Dick resumed

his seat, flushed, and, on the whole, triumphant; but not without some inward qualms when he thought of the paternal wrath, as also of certain possibilities under the law of libel. Lord Elvan's meeting broke up in some confusion. Mr. Macritchie and his friends did not mind that. They professed deeply to deplore the 'importation of such private and personal matters into the contest;' and expressed loud regret that the meeting should have insisted on 'hearing young Ingleby out,' despite the Chairman's endeavour to silence him. But Dick's oration afforded them, none the less, a secret delight. It might safely be left to the other side—the Trotter faction—to make the most of this revelation; and they had a great and not unfounded confidence in Mr. Smail of the *Border Warden*.

These things were fully recounted to Mr. Ingleby, within half-an-hour of his return to Shawkirk. Mr. Ingleby's feelings were divided, as has been said, between anger with his renegade offspring, and satisfaction at the injury that had been done to Mr. Arden's

candidature. He found himself assailed with questions, but was very cautious in his replies. Yes; it was true that his nephew had come into a fortune. As to the other matter, he declined to express an opinion. He was opposed to Mr. Arden on public grounds—and that was enough.

Mr. Ingleby took the chair that same evening at a meeting of Bailie Trotter's supporters, which was held in the Baptist Chapel. His manner towards the Bailie was coldly reserved; and he positively refused to hold converse with Mr. Robert Sanderson. The Independent Radical candidate and the 'Saumon lads,' however, could afford to overlook this. Mr. Ingleby's presence among them was all they desired. They did not expect him to be enthusiastic.

The meeting in the Baptist Chapel was made up almost entirely of the Bailie's partisans. The proceedings might even have proved monotonous, but for one circumstance—Mr. Laidlaw and the Sage were there. Mr. Laidlaw looked upon the contest and the candidates

from a strictly impartial standpoint. He did not greatly care who should prevail. But he was determined to drink deep of the cup of joy which only an election could offer. If he could not prevent one of the candidates from carrying the seat, he would at least do all that in him lay to make them suffer in the meantime. So he led his eldritch monitor from hall to hall, from meeting to meeting, to supply him with biting gibes and discomfiting questions, to be scattered broadcast and irrespective of party.

Bailie Trotter ascended the pulpit, and began his speech. His manner showed at first a certain constraint; he seemed somehow to have lost his usual glibness and command of inflammatory rhetoric. This was due to the presence of Mr. Ingleby in the chair. To curse Capital would be to offend Mr. Ingleby; to bless it, would alienate the Mountain. The Bailie therefore dwelt as short a time, and in as vague language as possible, on the Rights of Labour; and passed on to topics where he felt himself safe. Chief among these was the

Drink Question, for the Bailie had now definitely cast in his lot with Teetotalism. Mr. Laidlaw meanwhile looked on, until he saw the speaker warming to his work, and embarked on the full flood of oratory. Then, he knew, was the time for an effective interruption. The Bailie had taken a large blue-book with him up to the pulpit, and was pounding this as if it had been a Moderate Liberal or a moderate drinker, while declaiming with tremendous energy on the evils wrought by the accursed thing. "*Wha shot the hoodie-craw?*"—suddenly shouted Mr. Laidlaw, as the orator paused to draw breath. What this cry meant—to what episode in the shadowy past it referred—was apparently a secret between the Sage, who had prompted it, and the Bailie himself. It had the effect, however, of exciting Olympian laughter, and rendering the Demagogue's face as dark as the bird alluded to. But he soon recovered himself, and went on with his tirade more fiercely than before. "And on that day," he bawled, "I stood with the deputation before the Home

Sācretary—and I never stood before a nobler māān—no, nor a māān whose words—" Here Mr. Turnbull was again seized with Delphic gaspings. "Ay, Tammas?"—whispered Mr. Laidlaw—"what is't? Oot wi't, man! Quick!" —and he stooped his ear to the Sage's lips. "Cry til' him, Jimmy—cry, 'What aboot the Shirra', an' *his* words, whan ye stood afore *him?*'—" Mr. Laidlaw 'cried' accordingly; and again inextinguishable laughter made the roof ring and the Bailie cease to roar. The audience appeared to relish these interpellations quite as much as they did the candidate's eloquence. But when the speech was ended, and a show of hands was called for, they gave it unhesitatingly in Bailie Trotter's favour.

Mr. Ingleby's family saw very little of him during the two following days. From morning to night, he was engrossed in the work of electioneering. Mr. Ingleby, indeed, was indefatigable, and proved himself a terrible opponent. In whatsoever quarter he had any influence, it was used in favour of Trotter—or, at all events, against Arden. There was a

sombre earnestness in his denunciations and appeals which brought many waverers to a decision, and even shook the resolve of others who had hitherto stood fast in their allegiance. His two days' canvass, as Mr. Sanderson freely acknowledged, did more for the Independent Radical side than all their previous efforts, even with the Infidel thrown in.

Mr. Ingleby found the soil in a manner prepared for him by his son's celebrated speech, and the article in the *Warden* by which it had been followed up. Mr. Arden's friends went about talking furiously, but vaguely, of 'outrageous slanders' and 'odious calumnies.' Mr. Hislop would have had his client seek legal redress. But Mr. Arden, who had been all for such strong measures on a former occasion, seemed, for some reason, to shrink from them now. In reply to his agent's suggestions, he advanced the general principle that "it is always better to let such trumped-up stories die a natural death" —an aphorism from which Mr. Hislop drew his own conclusions.

At last the eventful day dawned upon the Happy Valley. Feeling in the town ran high; higher, as was natural, between the adherents of the two Liberals than between the Liberals and the Tories. A terrible fear lurked in the minds of the former that, through the unholy rupture in the ranks of light, the Boroughs might be eternally degraded in History. The thing did not seem likely; nevertheless, it was possible. The bare thought of Shawkirk being misrepresented in Parliament by a foe of the great Statesman who had carried away its heart and a sample of its woollens, was intolerable alike to the Liberal Committee and the Mountain. Madness that way lay. They tried to dismiss the ghastly dread, but in vain. It spoiled for them the fierce delights of political warfare. They could not enjoy the election-day as they had hitherto been wont to do.

All through the polling-day, from dawn to dewy eve, the Shawkirk streets were in a roar. No man spoke in his usual voice; he either shouted or whispered. There were crowds

around the committee-rooms, at the street-corners, in the bars. But the polling-booth was, of course, the focus of excitement. It was there that the great heart of Shawkirk beat the loudest; that the personalities were most fully-flavoured; that the 'Saumon lads' yelled the fiercest, and jostled the voter most spiritedly. It was there that Sandy Tennant kept hovering about—repeating at intervals in his loudest tones the mystic words—"Rise the poll, my lads! Rise the poll!" It was there that Mr. Hislop, Mr. Haig, and Mr. Sanderson took up their position, anxiously counting their pledges as they came up to vote.

At four o'clock the poll closed. The ballot-boxes were brought from the other boroughs to Shawkirk by swift horses and special trains. It was expected that the result would be declared before seven o'clock. Lord Elvan and Mr. Arden, at least, hoped fervently that it might. They were both most anxious to leave for the South by that night's express. They both looked forward with interest to the morrow—the one, as the first day of the Doncaster

Meeting; the other, as settling-day on the Stock Exchange.

Each of the three parties declared itself confident of success. Each had exhibited, during the day, conjectural or imaginary states of the poll, claiming a greater or less majority. Mr. Hislop, however, told his client in private that he feared things had gone against them. With the ballot, he said, there was only one thing a man could be sure of, and that was the abstentions. Now he knew it as a fact that a considerable number of Mr. Arden's pledged supporters had stayed away from the poll. He thought it on the whole most likely that Trotter would go in by a narrow majority—perhaps between twenty and thirty votes.

Mr. Hislop was somewhat surprised at the composure with which his client received these discouraging statements. For this there were several reasons. In the first place, Mr. Arden could not bring himself to believe that he would really lose the election—that such an one as Bailie Trotter would actually be pre-

ferred to him. Then, his loathing for Shawkirk and its inhabitants had now reached such a pitch that the near prospect of leaving the borough for ever gave him the liveliest satisfaction—and would do so, he thought, even in defeat. But the chief cause of Mr. Arden's good-humour—which had been proof even against the trials of the polling-day—was a communication he had received that morning from a certain legal firm in Lincoln's Inn. Messrs. Briggs and Barnard begged to state to Mr. Arden that their client, Mr. Arthur Lynn, had instructed them to pay into the London and Westminster Bank the sum of £8000, being the allotment money on 4000 shares in the Loan Peak Silver Mining Company, Limited. This news gratified Mr. Arden very much indeed. He was not quite sure what to make of Lynn's action in the matter. He would have preferred to have heard directly from Lynn himself, rather than from his lawyers. Neither had he gained any information on the subject from his daughter, who, for some reason, had left his letters unanswered.

But this refunding of the money he had 'advanced' for the purchase of the shares looked well — very well. It showed that Ingleby's efforts to get possession of the young man and his fortune must have failed. Had that "sanctimonious old libeller"—so Mr. Arden now described his opponent—regained his former ascendancy over his nephew, Lynn would certainly have repudiated, or sought to repudiate, the transaction. That he had not done so showed how much influence Camilla had over the young man, if only she would be sane, and exercise it properly. For Mr. Arden did not disguise it from himself that the 'transaction' needed to be explained—not defended, but certainly explained. Well, a quarter of an hour's talk with Arthur Lynn would suffice for that, he flattered himself. Meanwhile, there was the gratifying certainty that Lynn had paid the money and taken up the shares.

Mr. Arden and Bailie Trotter awaited the declaration of the poll with equal anxiety. The Bailie had polled all the Teetotalers; and

his disestablishment views, together with Mr. Ingleby's championship, had gained him the majority of the dissenters. But in Shawkirk, Radical as it was, the Church was exceedingly strong; and the support of the Liberal Churchmen, in every forecast of the election, had been reckoned a sure thing for Mr. Arden. It was among this class that so many had abstained from voting. The appearance of the Infidel on Mr. Arden's platform—the insinuations of the *Border Warden* as to his connection with Mr. Lynn of Lynnfield—the reports so industriously circulated that, in some way or other not clearly understood, he had defrauded or tried to defraud Mr. Lynn of Lynnfield's son—any one of these things, by itself, might have been passed over. But, taken together, they shook men's confidence in the candidate. There was something about it, they said, 'no' richt;' and this feeling gathered strength as the statements made by Dick Ingleby remained unnoticed and uncontradicted. Mr. Ingleby's exertions did the rest; and Mr. Arden lost the election. The figures

as exhibited in front of the Sheriff Court-house were

Trotter, . . .	1215
Arden, ...	1180
Elvan, ...	749

It was the smallest poll ever known in Shawkirk. There had been defections from the Trotterite ranks also, due to the Bailie's pronounced Teetotalism, which had alienated from him many of the hands. The Tories had, as usual, polled every man; and never had they come so near to victory.

Mr. Arden's disappointment was bitter and his anger fierce at the ingratitude of the Shawkirk electorate. He bluntly declined to satisfy Mr. Turpie's sense of the becoming by haranguing his rejectors. Indeed, his manner to his supporters changed sharply, after the declaration of the poll. It became such as greatly to lessen their chagrin at the result of the contest.

The Conservative candidate accepted the decision of the Boroughs with the imperturb-

able coolness he had shown throughout. Mr. Macritchie and his friends were enthusiastic; to have been beaten by so small a number was a triumph for the Cause. But Lord Elvan did not share their elation. He seemed to regard the whole thing from an impersonal standpoint. "Won by a neck, Elvan a good third," he said; "I fancy a roarer always does pull these things off, down here." Like Mr. Arden, his Lordship refused to speak to the people. He showed himself in the streets, however, and the people spoke to him.

Bailie Trotter bellowed his valediction from a window of the Temperance Hotel. Mr. Ingleby was not there; but Messrs. Sanderson and Tennant, with the other leaders of the Mountain, were gathered around the victorious candidate. It was, said the Bailie, a great night for Shawkirk. It was a great night for Scotland—perhaps the greatest night since the return of the Prime Minister himself. It was a great night for the army of toilers throughout the land. Henceforth there was a Voice to proclaim their wrongs in the high place of

the nation—a Voice that would not be silenced until redress had been wrung from the oppressors, and the old abuses swept everlastingly away. And the pale-faced girls and flaccid youths who were wearily emerging, just about this time, from the Mastodon Warehouse, would certainly have agreed with the Bailie that one section of the toilers, at any rate, wanted a Voice of the kind very badly indeed.

Deep into the night the Valley rang with the pæans of victory and the shouts of conflict. A quarter of a mile of Lord Leaderdale's park-paling was torn down to form a bon-fire in the market-place; and round this the young men chased the glowing hours, knit in dance with the gay-kirtled maids of the mill. That night no weaver lifted gun or spear. The birds rested quiet in the dreaming woods, the fishes in the silver stream—and the water-bailiff gladdened in his heart.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN ANXIOUS FATHER.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Arden to his daughter, the evening after his return from Shawkirk, "let us have a quiet talk. There is no denying that the result of this election has been a great disappointment to me. But for that old fanatic Ingleby, and his cub of a son, I should now have been member for that horrible place. But it serves me right. It all comes of mixing up business and sentiment."

"I am afraid," said Camilla, "I cannot enter into your feelings."

"I did not expect any sympathy from you. It was your own affairs I wanted to talk over. Why did you not answer my letters?"

"Because I might have been sorry after-

wards for having written what I thought of them."

"May I ask what you did think?"

"I had rather not answer that question."

Mr. Arden stared at his daughter with unfeigned surprise.

"Upon my word," he said, "you are a most ungrateful girl! It seems to me that since you became entangled with that egregious young man, you have been bewitched! You act and speak like a being bereft of reason. You seem utterly unconscious of the sacrifice I have made for you. What on earth, Camilla, do you mean?"

"That was what I was about to ask *you*. How have you made a sacrifice?"

"Good Heavens!" — cried Mr. Arden— "don't you see that I have lost a seat in the House solely through my foolish anxiety to promote your happiness?"

"No. I must confess I do not see that."

"That is because you consider nothing but your own desires and caprices. Can't you see that but for this love-making, and tomfoolery,

and—and madness of yours, I should never have been mixed up with these wretched Inglebys? But for you, that canting old miser would never have gone about as he did, moving heaven and earth to get men to vote against me by his abominable calumnies. I have consulted others' interests in place of my own, and, as a matter of course, I have reaped nothing but abuse and ingratitude. Of course, I should have known better. But I must say I did expect a different kind of treatment from my daughter!"

"What made you expect me to be grateful to you for bringing a—friend to ruin?"

"To—to *ruin?*—Did you say to *ruin?*"

"Yes. You know it is that."

"Oh, this is too much!"—cried Mr. Arden. "You refer to the Lone Peak?—to the shares which your—friend took in it, on my advice? —Well, it seems your friend is of a different opinion from you. He might have backed out of that transaction—at least, he might have tried to do so. But he has been better advised. He has shown his confidence in

the undertaking by holding his shares—all of them. He has acted in a most straightforward and honourable manner, that I will say. He has paid up like a man."

The girl's face became very white; but Mr. Arden observed nothing.

"Ruin!"—he continued—"why, have I not told you on my honour that that Mine will make the fortunes of all connected with it? How can *you* understand such things?—Now, just look at this. I shall take the trouble to make this matter clearer to you—"

"I don't want it made clearer. It is too clear to me already. I hate to speak of it. It sickens me."

"Camilla, I solemnly declare that you will one day bitterly regret the folly and injustice of your words to me. I shall convince you that you are ludicrously wrong about that mine.—Now, just look here, at these papers—" and Mr. Arden pulled forth a large blue envelope from his pocket.—On the subject of the Lone Peak, and on that alone, Mr. Arden was a fanatic. But his daughter

refused to look at the contents of the blue envelope, or to listen to his explanations.

"Very well," he said, in a tone of gentle resignation; "it only proves how unjust you are.—Now, my dear, when did you see that fortunate youth last? When are you to see him again?"

"I do not expect to see him again. There is no longer anything between us."

"What!"—cried Mr. Arden. "Do you know what you are saying? Nothing between you!—Oh, that is ridiculous! After all I have done for you! Come, come, my dear. You know all that is rank nonsense. There *must* be something between you. There *must*, I say."

"It is a thing I shall not discuss—it is worse than idle for you to speak of it to me. You have made it impossible for me ever to marry Arthur Lynn. Besides—why should you wish me to do so—*now?*"

"My dear, I am afraid I have misled you by the way I have sometimes spoken of that young man. I really believe you would be

happy with him—happier than you would be with a clever man."

"A clever man?"

"Yes—not that I mean he is a fool. I have no doubt he has talents—no doubt whatever. Now, if you have quarrelled, the best thing you can do is to make it up at once. He is fortunately the most plastic, trusting creature I ever saw—"

"I do not want him back, nor, if I did, would he come. I wish you would never speak of him to me again."

"My dear, you are nearly crying, I can see that. My poor, mad girl!—I am really more grieved than angered by you. Tell me plainly what you have done and what you want—after all, you know, I *am* your father—and I'm sure I shall do anything for you—that is, anything in reason."

"You can do nothing.—You know you have sacrificed too much already.—No," she added fiercely, "there is one thing you can do—never mention his name, Arthur Lynn's name to me again!—But if you must, what-

ever you do, don't defend him—unless you wish to drive me mad!"

"Camilla, don't become hysterical. It is terrible to have to deal with a girl like you. If you will only be sane, all will be well—I shall pay out that snuffling old hypocrite yet! Have you no spirit—no self-respect—that you can allow that milk-and-water Miss—that daughter of Ingleby's—to catch—that is, to marry her cousin? Good Heavens! Is he not—is he not the—the man of your heart?" —Mr. Arden felt a twinge of shame as he forced himself to utter this sentimentalism.— "Don't smile in that ridiculous, ironical way. I'll simply go to Lynn and bring him straight here again—"

"You shall not."

"Why not?"

"Because, I tell you, he would not come."

"Oh, stuff!—Only let me try him!"

"I see I may as well tell you. Mr. Dulcimer has asked me to marry him."

Mr. Arden uttered a low, long-drawn ejaculation. His opinion of Dulcimer fell,

there and then; and his daughter's conduct became at once natural and intelligible.

"Oh!"—he said; "I understand it all now. But why didn't you tell me about Dulcimer before?—I should never have believed it of Dulcimer!—Really, Camilla, you have not acted fairly in this matter—fairly to your father. If I had known that you cared more for Dulcimer than for Lynn, I should never have taken the trouble I have.—Of course, you accepted him?"

"Well, no. Not exactly. I said he must wait."

"He must do nothing of the sort. You must say 'yes' or 'no'—though, of course, I see it will be 'yes'—like a rational woman.—Dulcimer!" he repeated, "I would never have believed it of Dulcimer—never!—Do you know, Camilla, I thought you were mad?"

"Yes?"

"Yes. But I see now you have been very clever. Of course, I cannot attempt to force your inclinations, but I confess I am disappointed. I wish you had taken the other

man. On the whole, I should have preferred him—as a son-in-law."

"I can believe that. But I have not yet said I shall 'take' anybody."

"My dear Camilla," said Mr. Arden, "I am not going to have any more nonsense —understand that. I am not going to have Dulcimer unfairly used. There's a limit to that kind of thing, you know. And remember this—you won't find Dulcimer so pliable as the other fellow was; not by a long way."

Mr. Arden recalled how far from pliable he had found the poet in matters of finance. Mr. Dulcimer was rich, certainly; but then he knew so well how to take care of his money, that it was little likely he would ask Mr. Arden to take care of it for him. And he would, no doubt, demand a settlement — perhaps, even, money down. Mr. Arden felt that Dulcimer could never be to him what Arthur Lynn might have been. He was by no means the ideal son-in-law; he would not lend himself to exploitage.

Reflecting on all these things, Mr. Arden felt it incumbent on him to give his daughter a moral lesson.

"It's rather an ugly thing you've done, you know," he began; "I question if Dulcimer is worth it. You've done your best to break that young man's heart, and you've cost me a seat in the House. I have thought too little of myself, Camilla, and too much of you, all along—"

"Were you thinking of me when you got Arthur Lynn to take those shares you wrote about?"

"I was—most certainly I was. Whatever was good for him must be good for you—that was how I looked at it, then. You have made me a poor return — but you mustn't repeat the performance. There must be no mistake about your preference, this time. I won't have it."

Camilla rose to her feet. Mr. Arden said to himself that she was in "one of her tempers." She was, indeed, very angry; but with the anger that is akin to tears.

"Oh, this is more than I can bear!"—she cried. "My *preference!*—Are you only trying to torture me, or do you really not understand why I have done what I have done?"

"Camilla, don't be violent. It's no good. No, I certainly don't understand you. I gave up trying to, long ago."

"Then I will tell you. You have forced me. I have given up the man I love—yes, that I love!—rather than see him ruined, sacrificed to your selfishness through his love for me!"

"Camilla," said Mr. Arden, "I will not allow you to use such language to me. It is most unjust, and—and unbecoming in a daughter. Ruined, indeed!—when I have doubled the man's income! But it is quite impossible to talk with you in your present mood. You had better go—"

But Camilla was already gone. She had fled to her own room; and there, deserted by her pride, crushed by the sense of loss and of retribution, she gave way to a wild outburst of weeping.

Meanwhile Mr. Arden betook himself to his club. "I suppose," he said to himself, "I had better get it over. It has to be gone through some time. Only I hope Mallory is not there—I don't think I could stand much of his infernal insolence to-night. That girl seems positively crazed. Well, I'm sorry for Dulcimer!"

At the club, Mr. Arden underwent torture by condolence very creditably. He did not affect to deny that he was disappointed, but outwardly he was neither bitter nor despondent. He was bland, philosophic, judiciously regretful, at times even mildly humorous. Unfortunately, the Editor of the *Forum* appeared while he was still in the smoking-room of the Eclectic.

"Don't overdo the indifference, Arden," was Mr. Mallory's first remark. "That is an error one is very apt to commit in these cases."

Mr. Arden thought Mr. Mallory was decidedly overdoing the impertinence. His look said as much plainly; whereupon the Editor proceeded to soothe his ill-starred friend.

"There is one view, you know, Arden," he said, "which you ought to take of this election, and which is, after all, truly inspiriting."

"Indeed?"—said Mr. Arden.

"Certainly. This election has shown, as the mere return of a Radical over a Reactionist never could have shown, that the Tory in those regions is now an exploded feebleness, and will soon be as extinct as the Whig—the dodo of politics. Yes, I regard this Shawkirk election as an exhilarating proof of the strength of the Party."

"Oh, d—n the Party," said Mr. Arden. "I've had enough of the Party."

"Some people, now, might think you had *not* had enough of it. But, of course, I can excuse a certain random perversity of speech on your part while this wound is still rankling. No doubt, this election has cost you a great deal."

"It has," said Mr. Arden.

"The result, I must own, has been a surprise to me," continued the Editor. "You

had certainly the advantage of an admirable Address—and I do think that, on the whole, you had sound guidance."

"If you refer to the advice you gave me, Mallory," said Mr. Arden, "I can only say that it was, in the circumstances, the worst advice that one white man could give another—to be perfectly frank with you."

"I know that frankness is ingrained in your nature, Arden. But you must not be too hard upon me—I have no recollection of having at any time advised you to enter into politics. I always said you had a genius for finance—but that is another sphere."

"The ungrateful boors!"—said Mr. Arden —"after all I have done for them, and spent on them!"

"You refer, I suppose, to the cup you gave for their race-meeting?"

"That, and fifty other things. We shall see what that bellowing brute they've elected will give them!"

"You were wrong about that cup, Arden. I said so at the time. It must have been

offensive to many earnest people with votes. You should never have stooped to countenance a demoralising system of gambling."

"Seeing that you countenance it yourself daily," said Mr. Arden, "how in the name of Creation can you speak in that way?"

"What in the name of—ah—Evolution, do you mean by that extraordinary remark?"—and Mr. Mallory stared at Mr. Arden in seemingly genuine astonishment.

"Why, don't you keep a sporting Prophet on that paper of yours?—To be sure, he is always wrong. If any human beings are mad enough to 'follow' *him*, they will very soon be cured of their passion for gambling."

"Then, you see, that is altogether as it should be," said Mr. Mallory, making, at the same time, a mental note to have an earnest talk, on the first opportunity, with the unhappy seer.

"Yes," pursued Arden; "up in this room you can hear the men all laughing at him, any night after a big race."

"These singular demonstrations have hitherto escaped my notice," said Mr. Mallory. "But if there is no other defect you wish to indicate at present in the working of 'that paper of mine'—it is not mine, by the way, but that is a detail—there is another thing I should like to speak of. Is it true, what I hear of Mr. Lynn?"

"What have you heard about my young friend?"

"I am told that he has come into a fortune. Is it the case? You ought to know."

"I heard about it when I was down in Shawkirk—indeed, next to the election, it was the chief subject of conversation there."

"And have you seen the young man since?"

"No," said Mr. Arden, curtly.

"Ah—I suppose you will drop him, now he has ceased to be poor?—To-day a sub-editor, to-morrow a plutocrat!"—He paused, then added bitterly:—"It is enough to make one believe in Providence, to see how preposterously money is misallotted in this world!"

"But," said Mr. Arden, "I can't see why you should regret my young friend's good luck? I suppose you will be able to fill up his place on the paper?"

"The paper will continue to come out," said Mr. Mallory; "at least, that is the present arrangement. But I do hope, Arden, that this melodramatic affair will be a warning to you."

"I don't quite catch the insinuation," said Mr. Arden pleasantly.

"In the event of your again suffering from a seizure of philanthropy, and utilising the *Forum* to further your—ah—charitable designs, you must be more circumspect in your choice of a protégé. You must know him longer—so that there can be no mistake about his indigence. The surest and simplest plan will be to select him from among—ah—certain shareholders."

"You seem to think I committed a crime in trying to assist the son of an old friend. Does the Religion of Humanity forbid you to believe in gratitude?"

"It forbids me to believe in miracles," said Mr. Mallory.

"Look here, Mallory, we understand one another pretty well by this time, and you had much better let me know, straight off, what you are driving at. I don't want a speech, you know."

"As a holder of Lone Peak stock," said Mr. Mallory, shaking his head and arching his eyebrows, "I am painfully aware that speech is not silver. In that respect, I can fully sympathise with you."

"Man alive!"—cried Mr. Arden, "do you know what you are saying? Sit down here—sit down for just five minutes, and I will prove to you conclusively the folly, the—the stupendous folly and—and criminality of such talk! One glance over these reports"—here Mr. Arden drew from his pocket the same papers in their blue envelope which his daughter had treated with such disdain—"one glance, I say, over these reports will show you the utter madness of saying clever things about the Lone Peak Mine!"

"Indeed?"—said Mr. Mallory; and, seating himself at a table, he ran his eye over the documents which Mr. Arden laid before him.

"When did this—ah—this communication reach you, Arden?"

"Only this morning. You are the first to whom I have shown it, Mallory. And of course you will regard it as strictly confidential."

"Oh, certainly. And you have, I presume, every confidence in your correspondent?"

"He is an expert in such matters—a man who never failed me yet."

"What he says here is—ah—significant, Arden. There is no denying that. It will have its effect on the stock, undoubtedly."

"It will," said Mr. Arden—"when I disclose it. You will see those shares at twenty of a premium yet, or I am much mistaken."

Mr. Arden's blue envelope had the effect of a talisman. It averted the threatened rupture between the two friends. It sent Mr. Mallory away from the Eclectic that night a gladder and a wiser man—with a revived confidence in Mr. Arden's genius for finance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A DRESS RECEPTION.

A FEW days before Arthur Lynn again visited his birth-place, the following paragraph appeared in the *Border Warden* newspaper :—

"A ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.

"It is our grateful task to announce to our readers that a gentleman whom the inhabitants of Shawkirk must regard with feelings of the deepest interest contemplates taking up his residence amongst us under circumstances which we may justly designate as romantic. The gentleman we allude to is Arthur Lynn, Esq., the only son of our late esteemed fellow-townsman, William Lynn, Esq. of Lynnfield, whose beneficent endeavours to ameliorate the condition of our proletariat are still fresh and

green in the memories of all Fala-side men. We are in a position authoritatively to confirm the reports which have been already circulated that the son of our late philanthropic townsman has become the inheritor of a magnificent fortune, by the bequest of an Australian millionaire, the late Gilbert Hume, Esq. of Coorabinda, Queensland, a gentleman who was at one time in the employment of the late Mr. William Lynn, to whose generous intervention, we believe, Mr. Hume was partially indebted for his auspicious initiation into the commercial world of Australia. The fortunate inheritor is, we have no hesitation in saying, a worthy scion of his noble-hearted father. He has been an earnest and successful student both at home and abroad, and has given evidence that he is possessed with the genuine poetic fire, as our readers will admit upon perusing the following lines from a poem entitled *Perseus and Andromeda*, describing an episode of ancient Roman history, for which Mr. Lynn gained the coveted laurel at one of his alma maters." [Here followed an extract from

the Prize Poem which had once brought sorrow on the soul of Mr. Ingleby.] "The gifted author of these melodious lines at one time occupied, we understand, the position of tutor in the family of one of our most prominent citizens and genial civic councillors. Subsequently he has embarked with eminent success on the arena of metropolitan journalism, having previously to his accession to affluence occupied a prominent post on the staff of our contemporary the *Forum*. We believe Mr. Lynn's talents to be of a very brilliant description, while that he has inherited his late father's political proclivities is evidenced by his journalistic career. In his native town he will find an eminently congenial environment for the development alike of his talents and his riches. We shrink from soaring into rash vaticination. But while we are in every way gratified by the wise choice of the Shawkirk Boroughs at the recent election, and while we look with well-grounded confidence on our present earnest and broad-minded member, nevertheless when we hint that on some future

occasion this constituency may find a worthy successor to the Bailie in the gentleman to whose advent among us we have adverted, we believe that our suggestion is calculated to obtain very general endorsement."

For the facts thus gracefully set forth the editor of the *Warden* had been indebted to Dick Ingleby, with whom Mr. Smail had sought several interviews since the evening on which Dick had made his *début* as an orator. From Dick, also, Mr. Smail had obtained a copy of the Prize Poem, with some of whose feeblest lines he had garnished his own Attic prose.

Mr. Smail's paragraph aroused a certain degree of excitement in the Happy Valley. It confirmed the vague rumours already floating about. The inhabitants of Shawkirk, in their Grammar of Assent, classified the different orders of Truth thus—Spoken Truth, Written Truth, Printed Truth—in an ascending scale. Now that Lynn's wealth was guaranteed by typography, they had no longer any doubt on the matter.

The mill-owners and other employers of labour were not elated by the *Warden's* announcement. A mad-cap millionaire, fresh from a coterie of red-hot London revolutionists, was coming among them to revive his father's crusade against Capital, and with powers for evil far greater than his father's had ever been. The prospect filled them with disgust and dread. "From what I've heard of this young fellow Lynn," said Mr. Turpie of the Townhead Tannery, "I take it he doesn't know whether he's standing on his head or his heels. And he seems to have got so much money that he may do no end of mischief here, before he smashes. Why can't he stay and write nonsense in London, instead of coming down here to make a row?"—But Mr. Macritchie took another view of his ex-tutor's future. "He is a thorough gentleman, sir," said Mr. Macritchie; "all that about his philanthropy is a slander—a low Radical dodge of that low Radical paper, sir. I have had frequent opportunities of conversing with Mr. Lynn on politics, and I know that when

the time comes, he will be found on the right side—the right side, sir. He must settle here like a Scottish Gentleman—a Scottish Border Gentleman—and marry into a good family, a family with good blood, sir. And I have no doubt whatever that that is what he will do." —And the matrons of Shawkirk, as they glanced at their daughters, and the daughters, as they glanced at their mirrors, were quite as certain as Mr. Macritchie that this was Arthur Lynn's duty, if he could only be induced to see it.

"He'll marry his cousin, mamma, and that you'll see," said Miss to Mrs. Macritchie, in discussing the topic of the hour—"what else would he be coming down here for? And I'm sure she has waited most patiently for him—more so than *I* should have done!"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Macritchie a little doubtfully; "I never thought there was very much in that story—though of course things are different now. But it was always said, you know, that young Morton—"

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"The sailor!"—said Miss Macritchie—"Oh, no! He got his answer before he went to sea again, last July. I know *that* much. Of course, after all those dreadful stories, he must be off with that London girl. And now he's coming here to make it up again with Gertrude Ingleby, or else I'm much mistaken."

"It would be a great catch for Gertrude Ingleby," observed Mrs. Macritchie. "The newspaper said a Million!"

"Money's not everything, mamma," replied Miss Fanny. "And anyhow, papa has plenty"—she added. Now Miss Macritchie had been wooed, and recently won, by the Rev. Mr. Stronach.

At last the night came whereon Lynn was expected to return to his kinsfolk. Mr. Ingleby went alone to the station to meet him. Dick had not offered to accompany his father. He was not quite easy in his own mind as to his cousin's sentiments towards him. Though secretly proud of his election speech and its results, he felt a little uncertain as to

how Lynn might regard that oratorical display, supposing the thing to have come to his knowledge.

Mrs. Ingleby had insisted on making rather obtrusive preparations in honour of her nephew's arrival. She had decked her parlour with muslin curtains, flowers, and china ornaments, which seemed oddly incongruous with its dark mahogany and dingy walls. She had put on her best brocaded silk, and further adorned her person with brooches, ouches, and flame-coloured ribbons. Caroline, also, had 'dressed' for the occasion; and Dick had assumed a tight-fitting suit of glossy black, which gave him the aspect of a Sunday'd butcher. Thus they all sat, awaiting the coming of their kinsman—Mrs. Ingleby, in a manifest flutter, now glancing at the effect of her decorations, now appealing to Caroline as to the 'sit' of her cap, and anon remonstrating with her elder daughter, who had refused to make an elaborate toilet.

"Mamma, dear," said Gertrude, "I don't think Arthur will like all this ceremony. We

never dressed for his coming before. Why should we do so now?"

"But, Gerty dear," said Mrs. Ingleby, "we mustn't forget that Arthur is not the same to us as he was before. He *can't* be—that is, I mean, he will be quite the same to *us*, no doubt, but we can't be quite the same to *him*. This is such a change—you must remember that."

"I do remember it," said Gertrude. "I know that Arthur cannot be one of us, as he used to be. Of course he will go away from here, and live in another world — among people like himself. But while he is here, I don't think we should seem to stand in awe of him. Nothing would give Arthur less pleasure than that. We should try to be just the same to him as we should have been had he come back to us poor, instead of rich."

"Bosh!"—remarked Dick.

"I'm sure I don't see what harm there is in doing one's best not to look dowdy!"—said Caroline, with an indignant glance at her sister's dark-coloured dress.

"Oh, Caroline, for shame!"—cried Mrs. Ingleby.

"You'd better stop squabbling, you girls," said Dick; "that's the Governor's ring. Here they are, and no mistake!"—Then they all rose and moved towards the door.

Dick was obviously nervous. He had his own reasons for desiring to stand well with his cousin; and he had pondered deeply over the form his greeting ought to take. It must be at once dignified and conciliatory; and Dick had decided on the frank and manly style as being most proper to the occasion. So—"How are you, old man?"—he cried, as Lynn appeared at the door; but he did it with an effort, and became at once incoherent and abashed. Gertrude, coming behind her mother and sister, saw a shade of annoyance cross her cousin's face, as Dick's loud tones fell on his ear and Mrs. Ingleby's bravery met his eye. It passed instantly; but it dispelled the look of glad kindliness which the girl's face had worn the moment before. Like her father, she was startled by the change which

the months had wrought on Arthur Lynn. He seemed to have aged suddenly; he had lost the old, frank, eager expression; even his voice, she thought, had a different ring.

In the parlour, they all tried to seem at their ease; and they all failed. Lynn was most anxious to be to his kinsfolk what he had ever been. But this very anxiety helped to defeat itself. There was a bitter sorrow at the young man's heart—an aching sense of loss and of wrong. Nor could he rid himself of the recollection that those in whom he had placed firmest trust had deceived him, one and all. And the manner of his reception jarred upon him. The old parlour, with which he had been familiar from his earliest years, looked no longer homelike in his eyes. The newly-draped windows, the unwonted flowers on the mantel, struck him with a sense of strangeness; he tried not to think that they had been put there on his account. He was very fond of his aunt; he knew she was all goodness; but he did wish that she had received him in her plain stuff gown. There was a diffidence, a

suggestion almost of awe, in her manner of accosting him which made him feel profoundly uncomfortable. It was the same with Caroline and Dick. Gertrude—well, she was different from the others; but then, she was different also from the Gertrude who had been his friend, his confidante, his monitress in other days. Why could they not receive him as of old? Even Mr. Ingleby, without being in the slightest degree obsequious, spoke with a certain reserve and dubiety of tone altogether new in their intercourse. Lynn wished that his uncle would begin to reproach and lecture him, as he had been wont to do. The conversation flagged lamentably. It was impossible to discuss either the recent election or Lynn's London experiences without touching on matters that were *taboo*. And so, from one cause and another, Lynn had seldom felt himself duller or less at ease than he did on that evening of his return to Shawkirk.

Things were no better at supper. Mrs. Ingleby waited until her husband had asked a blessing upon the viands placed on the table.

Then she signed to Caroline, who rose, walked to the side-board, and producing therefrom a bottle of port, placed it at her cousin's side. Mr. Ingleby started, stared at his wife, then at the bottle—and then, suppressing a groan, averted his gaze from the evil object.

"You will remember, Arthur, I daresay," said Mrs. Ingleby, trembling at her deed yet proud of her temerity, "that we never take wine nor such things ourselves. But I said to Caroline that you would be used to having such things, now—and so we thought we might get this for you. It was the best the man had."

"That was very kind of you, my dear aunt," said Lynn; "but really, I'm not so bad as you suppose. I can do without such—luxuries, perfectly well. Indeed, I have had to do without them."—He was perplexed by his uncle's face of woe, and by his own desire to avoid wounding his aunt's feelings. The thing was, he felt, ridiculous in a way; but he was not in the least inclined to laugh.—

"I know," he went on, "that my uncle dislikes seeing anything of this kind on his table. But as you've taken all this trouble, aunt, and as I *do* like wine, I shall take just one glass, and then we shall put it away."

"You are well aware, Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, "what my views have ever been in regard to Stimulants. But I should not, since your aunt has thought fit to provide—this, I should not wish you to refrain from taking what you may have been accustomed to take. Though I hope that we may yet come to be at one on this highly important question."

Lynn thereupon sipped a glass of port, Mrs. Ingleby watching him the while as though she dreaded a Bacchic outburst. The bottle was then solemnly removed, followed by a lingering wistful gaze from the disappointed Dick.

"I suppose, Arthur," observed Mrs. Ingleby, "it must seem very strange to find yourself back in this quiet old house again, after all

the grand people and fine rooms you have seen?"

"My dear aunt, I have seen no grand people or fine rooms. A sub-editor on a daily paper is not, as a rule, dragged into society."

"But, Arthur, at Mr. Arden's"—began Mrs. Ingleby; then stopped short, confused and silent. Caroline came promptly to the rescue.

"Oh, Arthur," she said, "you'll never guess what happened last Sunday. Fancy!—Mr. M'Candlish made you the text of his sermon!"

"Caroline!"—said Mr. Ingleby—"be silent; I will not tolerate that tone of jest on such a theme. Mr. M'Candlish's sermons are not things to be treated lightly."

"They are not," murmured Lynn.

"Mr. M'Candlish," pursued Mr. Ingleby, "alluded to you, Arthur, fervently—and, to my mind, touchingly—in a passage of his forenoon discourse, last Sabbath."

"As a brand snatched from the burning—that kind of thing?"

"No—not that kind of thing. He spoke of

you, Arthur, as one who might yet become, under Providence, a helpful toiler in the vineyard—a powerful Instrument for the furthering of the good work."

"I have no doubt he meant well," said Lynn, a little wearily, for the thought of being made a subject for Sabbath edification was not much to his taste—"but the difficulty now-a-days seems to be to discover what the good work is."

"I trust and pray that you may yet be brought to see clearly what it is. The talents are not given us to be laid up in a napkin. This great good has been vouchsafed you, Arthur, to be wisely used. You have, I doubt not, reflected seriously on all this. You may, perhaps, during these past weeks, have come to a decision?"

"Well, no. I have scarcely realised what it means, as yet."

"The *Warden*," said Mr. Ingleby, "has been discussing your coming to Shawkirk. You had better read the paragraph. Here it is."

Lynn took the paper from his uncle's hand, and as he read his face grew harder.

"It appears," he said, as he laid down the sheet, "that I have become a poet, a politician, and a philanthropist. What have I done to deserve all this?"

"I'm sure, Arthur, you do deserve it—every word of it!"—said Mrs. Ingleby.

"You will see, Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby—who had been watching Lynn narrowly, almost anxiously, as he read—"that the writer of this seems to take it for granted that you will settle down here, in your native town."

"Yes. And that I shall spend my money after the manner of the Philanthropist. Well, that would be one way of adding to the happiness of the people here!"

"Arthur," cried Mr. Ingleby, "what do you mean? I have neither the right nor the desire to dictate what your future course shall be, but I do trust—"

"I meant that if I particularly wanted to add to the gaiety of Shawkirk, I should merely

have to set about losing all I possess. But don't be uneasy. I have no present intention of seeking ruin through benevolence."

"But surely you are coming to settle among us?"—said Mrs. Ingleby in undisguised alarm. "I have told all the people you were—and, oh dear!—if you don't, Arthur, we shall—that is, I shall—look so stupid! And Caroline and I had fixed on the very place for you to build a villa—and I think—though no doubt you know far more about those things than I do—still, I *do* think you should have a house with a Tower."

"If ever I build a house here, aunt," said Lynn, "it shall have a very high tower. —What I intend doing in the meantime," he added, turning to Mr. Ingleby, "is—to travel."

Mr. Ingleby cast a furtive glance in the direction of his elder daughter. Then he said sadly:

"I suppose there are no reasons why you should not, Arthur—for a time. But I shall look forward anxiously to your entering on

a career of earnest, useful activity at home. You cannot spend your life in travelling. You have now great, singularly great opportunities for good. These I hope—nay, I believe, you will not cast away. To none of us, whatever our riches — to none of us is it permitted to stand idle in the Market-place."

"No one was permitted to stand idle on the *Forum*," said Lynn; "I can answer for that. But I don't intend to be altogether idle, even on the Continent."

"That is well," said Mr. Ingleby.

"I mean to do something in the way of writing," said Lynn. Gertrude looked up with a bright glance in her cousin's face. But over Mr. Ingleby's countenance there passed a shade of disappointment.

"Writing!"—he said. "And what, may I ask, do you intend to write about?"

"Nothing very great," said Lynn. "It is a series of articles which I have promised to write from Berlin and Vienna, for the paper."

"The paper!"—cried Mr. Ingleby, grasping the arms of his chair, and half-rising in his anger and dismay—"the paper? Not that impious—not the paper of the man Mallory?"

"Why, yes. I am sorry if it pains you to hear that, uncle."

"It does pain me—it pains me more than I can say. I certainly thought, Arthur, that you had shaken yourself free from that—yes, from that evil association. I thought that you had come to see clearly the selfishness, and hypocrisy, of that—that man. Your own words to me in London led me to suppose so. Have you changed since then?—or has he?"

"I was once told, I remember, by—by a very clever friend of mine, that there were several Mr. Mallorys. I find that to be true."

"Oh, dear!"—exclaimed Mrs. Ingleby.

"Yes. And the Mr. Mallory I last met is very deeply interested in my welfare, I assure you."

"And do you not see the real motive of his 'interest' in you, Arthur?"—said Mr. Ingleby. "Do you suppose that, but for this change in your circumstances—"

Lynn looked at his uncle. It was a peculiar look, and had the immediate effect of reducing Mr. Ingleby to silence.

"You are a little hard on Mr. Mallory, uncle," he said quietly. "You must not judge him, after all, as if he were a Christian. He is consistent enough. His aim is, you know, to raise the poor and humble the rich. Consequently, he must not waste his energies in seeking to aid poor men. But when poor men become rich, he sees that they may be helpful toilers in the Vineyard —powerful Instruments for the Good Work. Therefore, it is his duty to guide them, and utilise them."

"I can but partly grasp your meaning. But I can see, to my sorrow, that whether or not you are speaking in a serious spirit, your heart is filled with the gall of bitterness. It is not right, Arthur—it is not

right that it should be so. You have been the receiver of a special bounty of Providence, and yet you speak as one who sees no distinction between the things that are lovely and of good report, and things which in the eyes of the Just—"

"Oh, hush!"—cried Mrs. Ingleby—"you will offend Arthur, if you speak like that!"

"There is no fear of that, aunt—not the very slightest," said Lynn, who indeed rather liked this return to his uncle's wonted manner. It refreshed him; it made him feel himself for the first time at home.

"Arthur," said Gertrude, "you have not told us yet what you are going to write about. You should tell us that, you know."

"What I am going to write," said Lynn, "is merely a series of articles on the life of the Continental working-man—his wages and houses and holidays, and so on. You don't think there is any special harm in that, do you, Gertrude?"

"No," said Gertrude; "I don't see why

there should be. I think it might be useful —useful for the workmen here to know about those things, perhaps."

"Gertrude," said Mr. Ingleby gloomily, "these are matters on which no young girl is competent to form an opinion. Those articles of which you speak, Arthur, may be innocent in themselves; I do not question it. It is your continued association with that unrighteous newspaper that I deplore. I cannot bring myself to believe that that man will exact any service which is not, in some way, perilous to the soul."

"It's not for me to try to advise, I'm sure," said Mrs. Ingleby; "but you know, Arthur, your father always went to church —it was the Established Church, to be sure, but still—well, I mean I don't think your poor father would have liked you to have anything to do with this dreadful man—at least, that is, I suppose he *is* an Infidel. I always forget his name."

"Let us say no more about it, aunt. You may depend on this, that I shall write no-

thing that need offend any one of you. And now, if you don't mind, I shall take a stroll down my dear native Shawkirk—my own romantic town. I want to call on my good friends the Messers—the only friends I had in the days we went a-tutoring—"

Mr. Ingleby shook his head; Dick just managed to suppress an ejaculation; Caroline opened her blue eyes to their widest.

"Arthur, now—I don't know, you know," said Mrs. Ingleby, "and of course you know best—but do you really think you should call on the Messers? Of course, they are very decent, honest people—but still—"

"Oh, don't do me the injustice to imagine that I am going out of pure friendship! I mean to make a short study of this place and its people—and I think I shall begin with the Messers. It's simply as a study, I assure you—to satisfy my own curiosity."

"Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, "I should like you to be with us to-night at Worship. We shall wait for you. Do you think you can be back in, say, an hour?"

"Certainly, uncle," said Lynn; "I'll be back in that time, without fail."

As Lynn rose to go, Dick also rose. All through the evening meal, Dick had scarcely spoken; but he had seemed to hang with rapt interest on his cousin's every word, and had watched with stealthy eagerness all the changes of his face. His expression and bearing now showed a certain nervous anxiety which Lynn knew how to interpret. "I'll walk so far with you, Arthur, if you don't mind"—he said, in a voice which strove to be easy and familiar; and betrayed the effort. Then they left the house together.

"How changed he is!"—cried Mrs. Ingleby, as the door closed. "There is something wrong with him—I don't know what it is, but I'm sure there's something wrong. Do you think, Gertrude, that *I* can have said anything to annoy or—or offend him?"

"No, no, mamma. You don't need to vex yourself by thinking that. It's not anything that you have said or done that has made Arthur different."

"Oh dear!" lamented Mrs. Ingleby—"oh dear! He has made me feel so unhappy! He is not the same to us at all!" And tears stood in the good lady's eyes.

"It's all that girl that has done it!"—said Caroline. "I always told you what she was—"

"Caroline!"—broke in Mr. Ingleby, who had been sitting in his arm-chair silent, and apparently a prey to the gloomiest reflections —"I forbid you to speak in that fashion of your cousin, or of that—that other person. Indeed, you had better, I think, drop the subject. It is one altogether profitless to discuss."

Soon after, Mrs. Ingleby and her younger daughter made their retreat from the enforced silence of the parlour. Gertrude was left alone with her father. She looked at him, as if expecting him to speak. But Mr. Ingleby said never a word. He sat there, gaunt and rigid, his shoulders bent, his hands resting on his knees, looking straight into the glow of the fire from under the shaggy pent-house of

his brows. His face was dark with thought; now and again his lips moved, as though he muttered inwardly to himself; he seemed unconscious of his daughter's presence.

Presently Dick appeared. His face was now as smiling and joyous as it had been clouded and anxious half-an-hour before. There was an air of chastened triumph about Dick that told its own tale to his sister, and made her feel sick at heart.

"Well," he remarked cheerfully, "I went along with Arthur to the Messers'. Old Messer got himself hurt in the mill to-day, and Arthur's gone off for the doctor, and to buy things. He told me I needn't wait. Queer fellow, Arthur!"

Mr. Ingleby showed not the faintest interest in this intelligence. It seemed as if he had not heard. Dick stared at his father in amazement.

"What's up with the Governor now?"—he whispered to Gertrude. "Is it me, this time?"

"No," said Gertrude.

"Then, of course, it's Arthur. I say, Gerty"—he went on in a confidential undertone, carefully pitched so as not to reach Mr. Ingleby's ear—"Arthur's a trump! I've always said it, and I'll say it again. He's got me out of the deepest hole I've been in yet. He's made it all right about the bill!"

"Then you've begged the money from him? You've broken your promise?"

"I never promised," whispered Dick, sulkily; "and I didn't beg the money—I borrowed it. I offered to pay him the interest—I did, I assure you! Arthur's not so soft as he was, though. He gave me no end of a jawing—said this must be the last time, and, by Jove! I think he meant it. — Well, money does make a difference on a fellow—there's no denying that."

Lynn returned in time for Worship. Mr. Ingleby's manner of conducting the family devotions that night was peculiarly solemn and impressive. The passage of Scripture which he chose for reading was the Tenth Psalm. It

was soon made apparent to every one that Mr. Ingleby had selected this particular Psalm with a purpose. He read it in a slow, deliberate way that was not ineffective, dwelling on its stronger passages with an emphasis that gave to each the force of a personal application. There could be no doubt in the minds of those who heard him that the 'man of the earth'—the 'heathen'—the 'lion in his den'—the wicked 'under whose tongue is mischief and vanity'—was, according to Mr. Ingleby's exegesis, the editor of the *Forum;* and that the person taken in his devices, drawn into his net, deceived by his crouching humility and so undone—was none other than Arthur Lynn. Lynn knew his uncle too well to be offended. Neither did he find it difficult to restrain his inclination to smile; Mr. Ingleby was so obviously in earnest.

"Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, when at last Worship was over, and good-nights were being exchanged—"I should like to have a few words of conversation with you—that is, if you are not too fatigued."

Lynn professed his willingness to talk with his uncle as long as he pleased.

"You will have your old room, Arthur," said Mrs. Ingleby; "and I do hope you will find yourself comfortable. We have tried to make everything nice for you, as well as we could. And oh, Arthur—" Mrs. Ingleby did not finish her sentence; but the beseeching pressure of her hand said the rest. She was plainly afraid lest her husband should speak his mind too freely, and her nephew should take offence. Lynn would willingly have reassured her, had it been in his power. Gertrude's manner of saying good-night to him was, he thought, cold and constrained. Mr. Ingleby he could understand; his aunt and Caroline were quite transparent; but he did not know what to make of Gertrude. It was as if some trouble weighed upon her mind—some trouble which she sought to screen from himself and from all beside. Lynn fancied that he knew what this trouble of hers must be; and that he might do something to remove it.

Mr. Ingleby's conversation with his nephew lasted for a full hour. After they parted, and Lynn had retired, Mr. Ingleby went slowly upstairs to his daughter's room, and knocked. Gertrude opened the door, as though she had expected him. She was in her dressing-gown; her rich-brown hair fell back on her shoulders. The calm sweetness of her face contrasted with the look of sombre care that sat on the brow of Mr. Ingleby.

"Gertrude," he said, "I have had a long and serious talk with your cousin. And the result of it has filled me with bitter sorrow. He listens to my counsel, but I can see he will follow his own."

"You have asked him not to write for that paper?"

"I have entreated him to abandon his connection with that man in London. And, I grieve to say, I have entreated in vain."

"You should not press that—indeed you should not. Let Arthur take his own way, and don't misjudge him. Don't make him think that you are his enemy."

"His enemy!" cried Mr. Ingleby. "No, his enemy is to be sought elsewhere. That is what I have tried to make him see, and he will not see it."

"But, father, Arthur told you to-night what he is going to do. He wishes to do some good in the world—not to live in idleness, as many would in his position. I know that is what he means, though he makes little of himself, as he always did. He is not going to write as you say this Mr. Mallory writes."

"I do not know that," said Mr. Ingleby. "This has not been a pleasant home-coming of his, Gertrude. It has not been pleasant for him, nor for me, nor, I fear, for you. I feel—yes, I cannot hide it from myself—I feel he can never be to us as he once was. My confidence in him is shaken."

"Don't say that, father! You are mistaken about Arthur—I feel sure you are."

"I fear not," said Mr. Ingleby; "I greatly fear not. Your cousin has changed grievously. He is soured."

"No, no—he is not that! I know he does not really mean any of the things that seem bitter to you. I understand him—at least, I think I do."

"He spoke to me to-night of you, Gertrude," said Mr. Ingleby gravely.

Gertrude started slightly, and at once became silent.

"He mentioned your name in connection with that of—of Mr. Morton. He seemed to imagine that—that—well, that I was standing in the way of your happiness—that I had forbidden you to think of that young man. He began to praise his friend to me."

"And—and what did you say, father?"

"I said nothing," replied Mr. Ingleby. "I let him go on, but I said nothing. I thought that was best, my dear."

"Thank you, father," said Gertrude. "You have been very thoughtful for me."

Mr. Ingleby, at these simple words, turned away his head for a moment. Then—"Gertrude, my dear girl," he said, "you know I

would do anything I might in duty to spare you pain?"

"Yes—I know that."

"But I must try to make you see clearly wherein your duty as well as mine lies. You must not—I am forced to say it for your sake—you must no longer think of your cousin as you have been used to think. Indeed, the less you think of him, the better it will be for yourself and for all of us."

"I shall always think of him as my dear, kind, clever cousin—and never as anything else."

"And I," said Mr. Ingleby, "if he allies himself, as he seems bent on doing, with the man Mallory—if he seats himself, as I fear he will, in the seat of the scornful—shall think of him as one who has bartered his soul for this world's praise—for the sound of the tinkling cymbals!"

"Father—you are doing him a wrong in saying such things!"

"You cannot change the truth, Gertrude,

by denying it. I tell you, I would rather he had come back bent on such schemes as ruined his father—I would rather see him scattering his wealth broadcast, as I once feared he would do—than have found him such as he appears! You heard how he sneered at benevolence—at religion! He spoke to me to-night of being *earnest!*—I would rather, far rather, he had come back with his old carelessness, than in this bitter, sceptical spirit."

"But, don't you see how his actions contradict his words? Remember, he has come through a great grief—and carries it about with him still. But I know that he is as true at heart as ever."

"If," went on Mr. Ingleby unheeding, "if he unites himself with this proud and evil scoffer—this Fool who has said in his heart, There is no God—if he does this thing, he shall be to me as a lost and fallen man—one whom I could not permit to sojourn under my roof, in the midst of my family—"

"Oh, father!—Do not say such things!"

"One whom I should bid a daughter of

mine pluck from her heart—were his wealth greater than it is ten thousandfold. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

CHAPTER XXV.

FESTAL ORATORY.

For about a week after his return to Shawkirk, Arthur Lynn had every morning to wade through a mass of manuscript which recalled his labours as a sub-editor. Letters of all sorts showered in upon him. There were circulars from every tradesman in Shawkirk, and appeals on behalf of charitable institutions, far and near. The broker and the moon-struck crotcheteer seemed alike to regard him as their natural prey. Whether men wanted a steeple or a soup-kitchen, cattle-troughs or revivalist tracts, music for the people or missionaries for the Jews, they one and all cried out to Lynn to give them what they desired. To judge from a certain section of the begging letters, there was quite a large class of men in Shawkirk who had

worked for Lynn's father, and had never worked since. One of two things had befallen each of these unfortunates. Either he had been deprived of an arm (the right) by the Lynnfield machinery, or he had found it impossible to gain employment on account of the prejudice against such as had shared in a scheme of co-operation. Then there was a host of letters from the 'relatives' of the late Mr. Hume, whose family seemed to have been as the locust in its increase. Each of these applicants had been led to believe that Mr. Hume had intended to execute a will in his or her favour, or at least to 'remember' them in a codicil. Nevertheless, they were far from viewing Lynn with malice. They expressed a firm confidence in his generosity and sense of justice. In some cases, they were even willing to leave the precise amount of their annuities to his discretion.

One morning, as Lynn was sifting the usual pile of correspondence, his eye was attracted by a large envelope with armorial bearings to match, and the motto "*Richt maks rich aye.*"

The envelope contained an invitation card of imposing dimensions, a glistering imitation of mother-of-pearl, which conveyed to Lynn, in large gilt letters, the information that Mrs. James Macritchie of Deloraine House would be AT HOME on the evening of the 18th, and —in smaller characters—that there would be dancing. Lynn smiled, put aside the card, and went on with his labours.

Meanwhile, in the parlour downstairs, the Macritchie invitation was causing much anxiety and excitement. Dick, Gertrude and Caroline had each received a card; and the question of acceptance or refusal had, of course, to be referred to Mr. Ingleby.

"What is this?" inquired Mr. Ingleby, as Caroline laid the missive before him.

"It's an invitation, papa. Gertrude and Dick have each got one, too."

"Indeed," said Mr. Ingleby. Then he took up the card and looked at it, handling it as gingerly as if it had been a dynamite cartridge. As he read, his features wore an expression of blended indignation and disgust.

"What"—he said at last—"what, may I ask, is the meaning of those letters in the corner—the letters R.S.V.P.?"

"That means," faltered Caroline—"that—that they want an answer, papa."

"Then your answer will be No," said Mr. Ingleby decisively. "This woman, it appears, is to be at home on the evening of the 18th. You cannot, it seems to me, do better than follow her example."

"Oh, papa—" began Caroline appealingly.

"You will understand that my decision is final," said Mr. Ingleby. "You will not say that you have another engagement, for that would be to write the thing which is untrue. But you may state, if you think it necessary, that I have bidden you decline this absurd invitation." And so saying, Mr. Ingleby took himself off to the Victoria Dye-works.

Caroline listened to this fiat in silent anguish. No sooner was her father gone, than she stole upstairs to Lynn's room, and timidly opened the door.

"May I come in, Arthur?" she said.

"Of course, come in. But what's the matter with you, Carry?"—said Lynn, noticing the look of trouble on his cousin's face.

Caroline's eyes were at once fixed on the large envelope with the Macritchie arms, which lay at Lynn's elbow.

"Oh, Arthur!" she cried; "so you've got one too! But, of course, I knew you would. It was not likely they'd pass *you* over!"

"One *what?*" asked Lynn.

"A card!—an invitation to the Macritchies' ball! *I* got one, and Gerty and Dick—and —and—"

"Well, Carry?"

"Papa says we are not to go! He says dancing is wicked, and that we are to stay at home!"—and Caroline's blue eyes filled with tears.

"Sit down, Carry, and let us talk it over. So you want very much to go to this ball?"

"Oh, Arthur, you know how dull it is here, and how few chances one has of meeting—people, and how little amusement of any kind Gertrude and I have—"

"Does Gertrude want to go as much as you, Carry?"

"Of course she wants to go, but not as much as I do—that's impossible. Arthur, if we are made to stay away, I think I shall *die!*"

"Is He to be there, Carry?" asked Lynn.

Caroline blushed, and smiled through her tears.

"I think so," she almost whispered.

"What is his name, Carry, and who is he?"

"Mr. Carstairs," said Caroline, still covered with blushes—"he's a lawyer—a solicitor, they call it. He is *so* good-looking, Arthur, and *so* clever! He has a very good position already, though he's only thirty—and I'm sure he'll be at the Macritchies' ball. Are you going, Arthur?"

"I did not intend to."

"Then we have no chance," said Caroline in despair. "If you were only to say you were going, and that you should like us to go with you, papa *might* allow us. He listens to

you more than to any one, since—since you came home."

"I don't think he'd listen to me, when we came to talk about dancing. Have you forgotten the arguments we used to have about that, long ago?"

"Oh, no!—and do you remember the afternoon he caught us waltzing in the dining-room? What fun that was! And what a rage he was in!"

"I remember it very well, Carry."—And there came back to Lynn the vision of the dingy room embellished with Christmas holly—the snow driving against the windows—Caroline seated at the piano—and Gertrude gliding with him through that stolen waltz in the dusk. How curiously distinct the picture was! The touch of his arm on his cousin's waist, the droop of her head to his shoulder, the red flicker of the firelight in her brown hair—Caroline's mingled music and laughter—Gertrude's shy enjoyment—the sudden and awful appearance of Mr. Ingleby on the scene—he remembered all. And yet, how long

ago it seemed! There had been no thought of Morton, of Camilla Arden, in those days, when he and his cousins had talked and read and laughed together, making the dull old house cheerful, in despite of Mr. Ingleby. Everything was changed now, and he felt half-disposed to regret it.

"Oh, Arthur, say you'll go!"—exclaimed Caroline, unable any longer to endure the suspense of waiting.

Lynn looked at his cousin, and her face of appeal decided the matter. It was quite true what she had said, that festivities did not often come in her and Gertrude's way. He had meant to decline Mrs. Macritchie's invitation. But if his cousins' acceptance depended on his, he would not disappoint them. That would be too cruel.

"All right, Carry, I'll go—that is, if you go. And look here"—checking his cousin's demonstrations of joy—"I've brought you something to wear at the ball—something I hope you'll like."

Lynn opened his desk, and took from it

two caskets, of which he gave one to Caroline. It contained a pendant and bracelet in pearls and brilliants. Caroline held her breath as she gazed at the jewels. Words failed her, for perhaps the first time in her life.

"This other is for Gertrude," said Lynn; "do you think she will wear them?"

"Why shouldn't she?" said Caroline. "I know *I* shall! Oh, Arthur, they are *too* lovely! How kind—"

"Don't say anything more, until we find out whether it is to be 'go' or 'stay.'"

"But you'll talk papa over, Arthur? You know you can, if you like!"

"I don't know that at all, Carry. But I'll try. And meanwhile, give those to Gertrude, with—with my love."

"Arthur, do you know what we all thought, that first night you came home? We all thought you were *changed*."

"Did you, indeed?"

"Yes. But now I see we were quite wrong. You are not changed a bit—only you're ever

so much nicer, because—because—well, you know what I mean!"

"Yes, Carry—I think I know what you mean."

"If I'm not allowed to go *now*," said Caroline, while her eyes devoured the sparkling gems—"do you know, Arthur, I *know* I shall *die!*"

Lynn laughed, and hoped there would be no occasion for any such tragedy.

"I had three invitations to-day," he said that evening to Mr. Ingleby. "One was from Mr. Stronach."

"From Mr. Stronach?"

"Yes. He invites me to 'open the first day of his bazaar,' as he puts it. He wants me to make a speech, in memory of our early friendship."

"Will you go?"

"I think not. My memory is scarcely good enough for a speech like that. The next invitation is from a Mr. Alexander Tennant, Secretary of the Shawkirk Working Man's Advancement Society."

"Well, now!" said Mrs. Ingleby, "there's a piece of presumption for you! A man of that kind—a common slater—to write to you at all, Arthur!"

"Why, it's a compliment, don't you see, aunt? Mr. Tennant, in the name of his advancing brethren, asks me to deliver the Inaugural Address of their session. The Society makes this request merely on account of my well-known sympathy with Labour."

"They are a gang of malcontents and mischief-makers," said Mr. Ingleby. "I trust, that you have sent this man a firm and pointed refusal?"

"Not yet," said Lynn. "Do you know, I rather like the notion of haranguing them? It would be a variety. And were not these men all supporters of Trotter, like yourself, uncle?"

"That," said Mr. Ingleby, "was an accident. This Tennant is one of those blind leaders of the blind, who have only too much power for harm in this place. His Society is simply a focus of discontent. I trust, Arthur,

that you will do nothing to countenance these firebrands."

"We shall see," said Lynn; "one ought to go somewhere, you know. But I have a third invitation—this time, to a ball."

"From that absurd woman, who sent those cards here this morning?"

"The same, I believe," said Lynn. "The girls seem to think that you don't want them to go, uncle?"

"I have distinctly bidden them decline this ridiculous invitation," said Mr. Ingleby. "You, Arthur, must of course decide for yourself."

"I think of going to Deloraine House, do you know?" said Lynn. "It will be a study."

"A most profitless one, I should imagine," said Mr. Ingleby. "Did these people ever ask you to any of their gatherings before?"

"Never—I must do them that justice."

"And do you not see for what reason they ask you now?—that it is merely because your position is altered?"

"No doubt," said Lynn; "but we need not discuss that, uncle. After all, why blame Mrs. Macritchie because she has modified her views? She has as much right to do that, I suppose, as you or I."

Mr. Ingleby let the subject of Mrs. Macritchie's motives drop, and diverged into a general statement of his views on the question of dancing. These were of a nature to make Caroline despair.

Lynn said no more for the present, but left it to his aunt and cousins to work on Mr. Ingleby's mind, which they did assiduously during the next three days. Caroline did her part by assuming an air of meek sufferance, which she had never known to fail with her father, in the long-run. Mrs. Ingleby at first based her appeal on the ground that the "poor girls should have a 'chance,' like their neighbours." But 'Arthur' was Mrs. Ingleby's main prop in all her arguments and persuasions. Arthur wished to go; but would not, without the girls. Arthur, she was sure, would give up the idea of addressing these

horrid working-men, if Mr. Ingleby yielded to him on this point. How could they expect Arthur to endure the humdrum life of Shawkirk, without some occasional distraction such as the Macritchie ball would be? This last argument had its weight with Mr. Ingleby. As to life in Shawkirk not being good enough for Arthur, that was, of course, absurd. But if this invitation were accepted, it would detain Arthur among his relatives for another week; whereas, if it were rejected, the young man might depart next morning for London—and Mr. Mallory. Mr. Ingleby had not yet despaired of his nephew's reclamation. Arthur had seemed more reasonable, more open to advice, since their last talk together on the subject. Much might be done in a week to wean him from that ruinous association. Mr. Ingleby resolved on making another attempt. It was not in accordance with his views of life that his daughters should go to a dancing-party. But Mr. Ingleby was prepared to stretch a point, if thereby aught could be done to redeem his nephew from the thraldom

of the *Forum.* When Lynn, urged on by Caroline, again broached the subject to his uncle, he found himself, to his own surprise, successful in his suit. An acceptance was accordingly sent to Mrs. Macritchie, and a refusal to Mr. Alexander Tennant.

Lynn found the days before the ball hang somewhat heavy on his hands. His aunt and Caroline were preoccupied with the great question of Dress. Gertrude's behaviour towards him perplexed, and even pained him. She was, as she had ever been, quietly thoughtful for his wants, interested in his interests, and ready to listen to him whenever he chose to talk. But he noticed that she never gave him the opportunity of being alone with her. It seemed as if an end had come to all their pleasant, cousinly intercourse. Lynn was conscious of no change in his own feelings with regard to Gertrude. He had looked forward to dropping into their old, easy, familiar relationship; to giving her his fullest confidence; to seeking her sympathy and counsel. But her strange reserve, her evident shrinking from all

allusion to the past, the way in which she kept him, as it were, at arm's-length, at first puzzled, then piqued him. Even in the midst of his own troubles, which gave him sufficient material for reflection, Lynn found himself engaged in making a study of Gertrude, watching her with a kind of sorrowful interest. She must, he thought, have some trouble on her mind—a trouble akin to his own. Morton's sudden return to a sea-faring life was the only thing he could think of, by way of explanation. He would scarcely have thought Morton the man likely to win the love of such a girl as Gertrude Ingleby. He recognised all Morton's good qualities; but he did think that his cousin would have sought something more from a lover than Morton could give. Still, as Lynn reflected, *à priori* reasoning is of no use in questions where a woman's heart is concerned. It must be Morton, for the simple reason that it could be no one else.

What could be the reason of his cousin's unhappiness?—for that she was unhappy he

could see. A lovers' misunderstanding?—that was scarcely probable between these two. More likely Mr. Ingleby had interfered. Already, in talking with his uncle, he had sought to find out whether it were so; and Mr. Ingleby's way of putting the question by had seemed to give colour to his suspicions. A deep pity for his cousin filled Lynn's mind as he came to this conclusion. He himself, in a similar case, could seek distraction in work, in change of scene, in mingling with the world. But she would have to bear her heart-sorrow as best she might through the dull routine of life in a provincial town, where the slow days dragged their length monotonously on, and such a thing as this Macritchie ball became an event of the first magnitude. Yes, he was sorry for Gertrude. Sometimes he forgot his own unhappiness in thinking of hers.

For Lynn, in those days, was unhappy. No doubt, wealth had brought to him its consolations. The power to dispose of one's own life in one's own way, unconditioned

by the need of what Mr. Ingleby called 'bread-winning,' had a charm of which the young man was fully conscious. He had realised *that* on the very morning after Mr. Ingleby's revelation; if ever he entered the *Forum* office again, it was solely because he chose to do it—not because he had to earn a livelihood by sub-editing. And the advantages of his new position became more evident each day.

But the thought of his lost love embittered the novel and pleasurable sensation of being rich and free. Again and again he went over in his memory that last interview with Camilla in the garden. To what extent had she been in her father's secrets, and in his plot? Had the girl been Arden's accomplice, his decoy and confederate, or only—as he himself had been—his dupe?

Sometimes Lynn was disposed to take the more charitable, sometimes the harsher, view. Yet either supposition, he felt, left her conduct, her words, to some extent

enigmatic. She had dismissed him, poor; she had called him back to her, rich — so much at least was certain. And she had thrown him over in the end—for Mr. Dulcimer. That he could not understand. Mr. Dulcimer was no doubt a man of fashion, who dressed well, went into good society, and had a certain air of distinction and superiority which might impose on a silly girl. But Camilla, whatever she might be, was no silly girl; and he had heard her laugh too often and too genuinely at the poet's affectations to think it possible that these could have won her heart.

The other alternative was to suppose that she meant to marry Mr. Dulcimer for his money. That would have been Lynn's conclusion, but for the fact that Camilla had known about his fortune before he knew about it himself. Why, if she were utterly heartless and mercenary, had she not played out her game to a successful end, as it had been in her power to do? Arguing thus with himself, Lynn came to take a somewhat more lenient

view of his former sweetheart's behaviour towards him.

Of Mr. Arden he thought only with indignation and disgust. The parade which that gentleman had made of his 'gratitude,' his professions of disinterested friendship, his simulation of kindly interest and regard, angered and outraged Lynn more even than the 'transaction' which had made him a principal holder of Lone Peak stock. He wanted to be done with Mr. Arden at any price. Rather than be mixed up with him and his affairs—rather than have the use which he had made of his own daughter discussed and exposed—Lynn had risked the loss of a considerable portion of his newly-inherited wealth. He did not regret the sacrifice, which he had made in part on Camilla's account — to the complete mystification of Mr. Ingleby and of his legal advisers.

He wished to forget, if possible, all that had happened since that night when Mr. Arden had come to him amid the ruins of his father's

factory. But in this he failed. He could not forget Camilla. Neither could he forget the plausible phrases and calculated kindnesses by which he had been beguiled and befooled. His faith in the better side of human nature had received a rude and painful shock. Often, during his London days, it had pleased while it somewhat surprised him to find how good everyone was to him in spite of his poverty. Now that the true motives of such goodness stood revealed—now that he knew himself and was known to be rich—he was inclined to look with suspicion on every manifestation of good will.

His experience of Shawkirk had not tended to restore his confidence in human kind. He had become, in truth, heartily sick of the place and its people. He did not class his relatives among the sycophants whom his wealth had drawn around him. But neither did he feel himself comfortably at home in his uncle's house, as he had been wont to feel. He knew that his uncle meant to say something more to him on the subject of

the *Forum* letters; and that, not improbably, they would have a quarrel over it. He did not want to quarrel with Mr. Ingleby; but he had no intention of giving up the plan which seemed the only definite thing in his immediate future. But for the fact that his going would have deprived his cousins of a rare enjoyment, he would have left Shawkirk ere now. Each day he became more impatient to depart. He resolved that the day after the Macritchie ball would be his last in Shawkirk, at any rate for the present.

As they drove up to Deloraine House on the eventful evening, they beheld that mansion in a blaze of light, from the basement to the topmost chamber in the tower. They stepped out on a red cloth, which had been laid over the gravel of the 'approach'; passed through the hall, where lighted candles flickered among the armour and the antlers, and bowers of evergreens and exotics had been symmetrically arranged at regular intervals; and so up the great staircase.

"Isn't Macritchie doing the thing in style!" said Dick, as he and Lynn waited on the landing for the two girls. "It's quite nobby, don't you know?" he added, surveying the magnificence around him. "And all in your honour, old man! If you hadn't come to Shawkirk, there would have been no ball. Everybody says so."

These remarks filled Lynn with dread. Were they going to 'lionize' him? He had not discounted this possibility, and began to regret the hour when he had consulted Caroline's wishes rather than his own.

His reflections were cut short by the appearance of his cousins. Gertrude, in her ball-dress, almost startled him. He had never before thought her exactly beautiful; but now he saw that she was so—not with a *beauté de diable*, but with a winning loveliness, a simple unconscious grace of manner and carriage—that beauty which lingers in the memory like a strain of music or the perfume of a flower. For long after, Lynn

recalled his cousin as she appeared to him just then—the coils of rich-brown hair round the shapely head; the veiled lustre of the dark eyes; the red lips that seemed redder from the slight paleness of the face, parted in a smile of animation and expectancy, for this was the girl's first ball. Lynn was glad to see that she was wearing his jewels; he scarcely knew why. He no longer regretted having accepted Mrs. Macritchie's invitation. Giving Gertrude his arm, he passed through the lace-curtained doorway into the drawing-room, while Caroline followed with her brother.

Dancing had not yet begun. A string-band from the city, ensconced among evergreens on a platform in one corner of the room, sat with their music before them, ready to strike up. The ladies were ranged on red-cushioned forms round the room; the men stood grouped together here and there; they all seemed to be waiting for something. Mrs. Macritchie, enthroned on her chair of state, had also the air of one

who waits. Lynn became dimly conscious of all this — of a hush that fell upon the guests, and a concentration of eyes upon himself—as he passed up the room, with Gertrude on his arm, to make his bow to their hostess.

No sooner had that ceremony been gone through, than Mr. Macritchie bore down upon him, and his worst fears were more than realised. Mr. Macritchie positively bubbled over with geniality. He stood for some minutes shaking Lynn by the hand, expressing the joy it gave him to see Lynn under his roof, "on this festive occasion" —to see him "restored to his true position in Society." There were quite a number of people in the room, said Mr. Macritchie, whom he really must introduce to Mr. Lynn; people who had come to this ball expressly to meet him. There was Turpie of the Townhead Tannery, and Purdie of the Falabridge Mills, and various others—the magnates of Shawkirk society; men who had known Lynn's father in former days, and now yearned to

make the acquaintance of Lynn himself. All this was bad enough, Lynn thought; but there was worse to come.

"We have been waiting for you, Mr. Lynn," went on Mr. Macritchie, passing his arm affectionately under his guest's. "Will you open the ball with Fanny—with my daughter? That will be the proper thing, you know."

Lynn started, looked round him in alarm, and said something about appreciating the compliment, and having intended to dance the first dance with his cousin.

"Oh, you will have lots of chances of dancing with your cousin before the night's over, Mr. Lynn! And besides, I see you are forestalled. That's young Purdie with Miss Gertrude—a very decent fellow, young Purdie; not bad-looking, and a partner in his father's concern already. Excellent position in society, young Purdie's. And there's Miss Caroline off with young Carstairs—know young Carstairs? Second son of Carstairs of Ladywell, the W.S.—place near here—splendid legal

connection, that. Fine-looking fellow, isn't he? Seems very attentive to Miss Caroline, doesn't he?—ha! ha! Now, Mr. Lynn, come along. You haven't seen Fanny yet, and you *must* open the ball with her. There is an etiquette in these matters, you know—a custom, I may say, handed down to us from our forefathers. Your position, my dear sir, in a way imposes, yes, imposes this—shall I say, duty?—upon you. *Noblesse oblige*, you know," said Mr. Macritchie, exhausting his French; "my dear sir, *noblesse oblige*."

Lynn resigned himself to his fate, and walked through a quadrille with Miss Macritchie. Thereafter he had the Shawkirk notabilities presented to him by Mr. Macritchie; and then their wives and daughters by themselves. Lynn's sufferings during this levee were very great. One stout old man after another was led up to him, saluted him with profound respect, and congratulated him on his accession to wealth, just as if he had done something very grand and heroic. Some of them made allusion to their acquaintance with

Lynn's father in former days; and this jarred upon the young man more than anything else in the proceedings. The impression which he in his turn made on Shawkirk society was not altogether favourable. His manner was felt to be 'haughty.' This, however, helped to confirm the exaggerated reports as to the magnitude of Lynn's fortune. The young man who could afford to treat a personage like Mr. Turpie so cavalierly must be, at least, a Millionaire.

After dancing with one or two partners provided for him by Mr. Macritchie, Lynn began to think he had had enough of it. He looked about for his cousins. Caroline was being whirled through a waltz; Gertrude was just rising to dance. He made his way towards her.

"Will you give me the next waltz, Gertrude?" he said.

Gertrude looked at her card. Every dance was initialled. Lynn cursed his own negligence in not making his request before. Now that he saw his cousin among the other young

ladies of Shawkirk, he began to wonder why he had not done so.

"I'll sit out the dance before supper with you, if you like, Arthur," said Gertrude; "I'll make some excuse—it's Mr. Purdie, and I've danced with him before. Will that do?"

"That will do very well, Gertrude. Then I shall have the waltz after supper with you. And now I shall have to dance with the young lady that Mr. Macritchie is bringing along—the young lady in the dress 'like the sound of a trumpet.' You see her?"

Gertrude laughed; and next moment was rapt away from him in her partner's arms.

Lynn danced with the young lady in scarlet, and with many other young ladies. To do so was his only way of escape from Mr. Macritchie, Mr. Stronach, and the Turpies and Purdies, who hovered about, eager for the honour of addressing him. At last came the dance before the supper.

"Gertrude," he said, "this room is insufferably hot. Let us go down into the hall, where the greenery is."

Gertrude took his arm, and they seated themselves in one of the bowers, where they were screened from observation.

"It is the instinct of the hunted animal that has brought me here," said Lynn; "this seems a pretty good covert, do you know?"

"I'm afraid you have not been enjoying yourself very much, Arthur."

"At any rate, I am now—if only our host does not unearth me. I know he means to set me some dreadful task; probably to take in Mrs. Macritchie to supper. Now, I think I did my share in 'opening the ball.' I don't want to take in Mrs. Macritchie. I'd much rather take in you, Gertrude. May I?"

"Of course you may, Arthur, if you wish."

"I do wish," said Lynn. He had taken Gertrude's fan, and was fanning her as she lay back on the settee. How different she looked, he thought, from the quiet girl, in the dark stuff gown, whom he had watched moving about his uncle's house during these last days! What was it that had changed her—

that had made her beauty appear? Not only the dress, the jewels, the flowers in her hair. It was the excitement of the ball that had brought the colour to her face, the sparkle into her limpid grey eyes; that gave to her every motion the vivacity that had been wanting before. What might not Gertrude be, he thought, if only she were taken out of her dull surroundings—if only she were permitted to see and to enjoy a fuller and richer life! He began, half-consciously, to compare her with Camilla. Both were beautiful, though in a very different style of beauty. Both were, as to character, very much what circumstances had made them; he might plead that in Camilla's defence. But Gertrude could not have been guilty of deceit, however tempted; he felt sure of that. How different things might have been with him, if—

"Arthur, you are forgetting to fan me. How deep in meditation you are!"

Lynn looked into the girl's face, so earnestly that her eyes drooped beneath his gaze.

"I was thinking about you," he said. "You have quite puzzled me to-night. You are transformed!"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, you seem quite another person from the demure young lady I've been used to of late.—Now, why don't you ask me which I like best? Any other girl than you would have done that!"

"Well, I will ask you."

"I think I like you better as you are now. Do you know, Gertrude, I thought you had been—well, distant, rather, to me, since I came back to Shawkirk? You made me think I had said or done something to offend you?"

"How could you think that? You don't know how glad I was to see you that night when you came in with father, and found us all waiting to receive you! And you have been so good and kind, and patient, with all of us."

"Don't say that, Gertrude."

"But it is true. About Dick—"

"Oh, don't speak of that!"

"No, I will not. It makes me ashamed. But I am so grateful to you, for all that! And though I'm afraid I did not thank you properly for your lovely present—"

Lynn took his cousin's hand, and looked at the bracelet that encircled her arm.

"Do you know," he said, "I felt quite relieved when I saw you wearing this? I was afraid that you might not—might not have liked to take it?"

"Why should I not, Arthur?"

"Oh, I don't know. It was an absurd notion, of course."

Lynn did not explain to his cousin that he had thought it possible she might not care to deck herself with the jewels which had not been given her by her lover.

"I took them," said Gertrude, "just as if they had come from my own brother. Just as Caroline did."

"Of course," said Lynn. "Yes, that was right. I should like to talk with you, Gertrude, just as we used to talk in the old

days. I have had no chance until now, and this is likely to be my last."

"Your last?"

"Yes. I leave Shawkirk to-morrow. I have had a letter from Mr. Mallory. He wishes to see me, and I shall go. Your father, I know, will not like it, but I think it the right thing for me to do."

"You must do what you think right. It would be selfish to wish to keep you here."

"I want to do something," said Lynn; "or, at any rate, to try. I find that having a fortune left one is not an unmixed good. The people here seem to think that simply to *have* money is quite enough. They have dinned that into my ears until I am sick of it."

"I know it is not enough for you."

"I hope not—I do hope not. I used to have ambitions, as you know. I used to think a great deal, and to speak sometimes, about what they call a Career. Am I to give up all that, just because I don't need to work any longer for my daily bread?"

"Surely not. I do like to hear you speak in that way, Arthur!"

"I know that you will understand me. My uncle does not, and perhaps never will, though I know he means me well. If ever there was a time when I needed to be doing something —when I *could* not sit down and enjoy the mere use of money and the sensation of being rich—that time is now. Of course you know what I mean?"

"Yes," said Gertrude.

"But I don't want to talk about myself. I want to talk about you."

"About me?"

"Yes. I have eyes to see, Gertrude, and they say that sympathy makes us clear-sighted. I don't want to force your confidence. But it has seemed to me that you must have a trouble like—like my own. I have no right to speak to you about such a thing; I know that. But I thought—I thought that I might be of service to you. You know how willing I should be!"

Gertrude did not speak. Lynn fancied

that she shrank from him, as if displeased. She had taken her fan, and now raised it so as to screen her face from his view. Lynn began to feel sorry for having spoken; but thought it best, since he had begun, to go on.

"I thought, you know, that if there were any misunderstanding, I might do something to clear it up—or if there were any—any objections, I might do something to remove them. I have not made you angry with me, Gertrude?"

"Oh, no. You have not done that."

"That is what I meant to say, though not the way I meant to say it. But can't you make use of me in any way? Is there nothing—nothing that I can do?"

"Nothing!" she said—"nothing!"

"But," persisted Lynn, now more certain than ever that he had been right in his conjecture, "if you want help at any time, Gertrude, you will come to me?—you will send for me? Remember, I would go anywhere to serve you. I should like you to promise me that."

"Don't—don't talk of it any more. I cannot promise you—but you must not think me ungrateful. Indeed, indeed, I am not that!—See! There they come downstairs to the supper-room. Let us go."

Lynn, without a word more, gave her his arm, and led her forth. He was sorry now that he had spoken; he could have wished his words unsaid. He feared that he had given Gertrude pain, instead of comfort, as he had intended. He could not but remark how the gaiety had quite gone from her look and manner, since his unlucky reference to her relations with Morton. He had been wrong thus to spoil her enjoyment of the present hour—to make their last talk together, perhaps for long, a thing she could not remember with pleasure. He set himself, while ministering to her wants at table, to win back the smile to her face, and in a measure succeeded. But it was, he felt, only in a measure.

At supper, Lynn noticed a curious change pass over Mr. Macritchie. The champagne flowed like water, and the jest and laughter

grew loud around him. But Mr. Macritchie sat silent and preoccupied; and his hand shook as he raised the wine-glass at frequent intervals to his lips. A dark suspicion of what those symptoms might portend crossed Lynn's mind.

"Gertrude," he said, "have you marked our host of late? Do you notice anything peculiar about him?"

"Yes. How pale he is! Do you think he can be unwell?"

"I fear not. I may be mistaken, but I gravely fear he is about to have a relapse of oratory. It all comes of the election, I suppose. Only observe him!—"

Mr. Macritchie, with cheeks ghastly pale, and lips tightly compressed, gazed for some moments abstractedly into space. Then he drank two glasses of champagne in swift succession, rapped on the table, and rose. It was even as Lynn had foreseen.

"Good Heavens!" said Mr. Carstairs to Caroline—"the man is going to *make a speech!*"

The talk and laughter ceased at once. Mr. Macritchie coughed an overture, and began :—

"Ladies and Gentlemen: There are occasions in a man's life when he cannot remain silent—when he is compelled to give inadequate expression—I mean, expression however inadequate—to the sentiments within his breast. This, Ladies and Gentlemen, is one of those occasions."

Here Mr. Macritchie stopped abruptly, and there was for some moments a tingling silence in the room. At last the orator resumed, with striking glibness :—

"It will no doubt be as agreeable for you to fulfil the request I have to make of you as it is agreeable to me to make it. And I have no doubt that the sentiments I am about to express will prove to be vibrating in harmony with those of all those whom I now see before me."

A burst of applause rewarded this effort, and Mr. Macritchie became absorbed in a

study of the champagne bottle, whose neck he had grasped mechanically in his right hand. He strove, for some time in vain, to recall the sentence at the top of the second page of the speech in his pocket; and again sought inspiration from the wine-cup.

"We all know, Ladies and Gentlemen, what the Poet says—that—well, that there are flying hours, and that we are to—well, to chase them, you know—with—with glowing feet. But why should I detain you from the giddy dance with these reminiscences? There is one thing, and only one, which I shall ask you to do—to unite with me in paying a well-merited honour to the gentleman whom I am proud—yes, proud to see at my Board to-night. Mr. Lynn—"

Here Gertrude, finding her own fears thus realised, cast a glance at her cousin's face. Lynn sat motionless, looking, fixedly and grimly, straight before him. She glanced at him from time to time during the remainder of Mr. Macritchie's speech; but he took no

notice of her or of any one, and his expression and attitude never changed.

Mr. Macritchie halted and stammered through about five minutes' speaking; referring to Lynn's talents and his wealth; to the distinctions he had won in his university career; to his place in the world of letters; his auspicious return to his native town, and the pure joy it gave him, Mr. Macritchie, in common with all who now heard him, to welcome back, elevated to his true rank in society, the son of one whom many of them had known and respected. He would not dilate on this subject. He would conclude—and Mr. Macritchie's relief on reaching a coherency was obvious—he would conclude by asking them to drink to the health of Mr. Arthur Lynn.

Mr. Macritchie sat down amid loud applause, and the toast was duly honoured. Then Lynn rose to reply. There was an evident curiosity to hear him, especially among the Turpies and the Purdies—who imagined that Lynn might take the opportunity which Mr. Macritchie's

reference to his father's schemes had afforded him, to develope his own views on philanthropy, co-operation, and kindred subjects. He was so rich! And he could do, if so minded, such a lot of harm!

Outwardly Lynn seemed as cool and self-possessed as Mr. Macritchie had been the reverse. Inwardly, he was execrating his own mistake in ever going to Deloraine House, and his blindness in not forecasting the manner of his reception. His speech should be short; and his exit thereafter immediate. He would leave Shawkirk next morning; he would go somewhere, among people who did not know of his money, or would forget about it; he would not stand this kind of thing for another day. His irritation and annoyance were no doubt greater than the occasion warranted; but he felt as if all his trials of the past fortnight had culminated in Mr. Macritchie's speech.

"Mr. Macritchie, Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, "I have been trying to discover to

what I can be indebted for the honour of having been selected as the victim of this solitary toast. No one of you can be better aware than I am that it is not due to any merits of my own—that it is not in recognition of anything that I have done; because, as those of you who know anything at all about me must know, I have consistently done nothing. It is true, as our host has said, that I have gone through the antiquated course of studies still prescribed at our Universities. But these studies cannot, of course, be regarded as Work in the now recognised meaning of the word, being totally opposed to the spirit of the age, and having no pecuniary results worth mentioning. All earnest men, we know, mean by work the production of money; and I should be insulting your common sense if I supposed you capable of accepting any less practical definition."—"What does the fellow mean by that?" here whispered Mr. Turpie to his neighbour. —"Casting about me for some reason," continued Lynn, "for the honour you have done me, I have come to the con-

clusion that it must be on account of the name I bear. In the very flattering speech of our host, and the equally flattering reception you gave it, I see a proof of your sympathy with the efforts of Philanthropy."—Here Mr. Turpie started violently, and emitted an ejaculation which reached Lynn's ears, and gave him a cue.—"Some of you," he went on, "may have heard that, through no efforts of my own, I have become the unworthy possessor of—well, of a sum of money sufficient to insure me independence—in other words, idleness. Various suggestions have been made to me regarding the disposal of this sum of money. Numerous outlets for capital have been presented to my choice. As yet I have not decided on the matter; but one may be allowed to have one's dreams. I was standing to-day among the ruined walls which my father built; and the thought came to me—What if these walls could be raised again?—if the machinery could once more throb and pulse within them?—and if the name of Lynnfield could prove to the world that the

interests of the employer and the employed are one?" — At this Mr. Turpie groaned audibly, and Mr. Purdie's face grew pale.— "It was, I know, a dream and nothing more. But though I do not pledge myself to carry out those philanthropic schemes which have failed once, but might succeed again, the reception you have given me to-night is an incitement and an encouragement. I shall never forget it, and I thank you for it from my heart."

There was loud applause as Lynn resumed his seat; but the faces of his audience wore, for the most part, an expression of anxious bewilderment. The general impression of the capitalists was that Lynn had shown traces of a crazy ambition to woo poverty after the manner of his father. They felt a certain resentment against Mr. Macritchie. He had always assured them that the younger Lynn had quite escaped the taint of philanthropy. He had led them into drinking Lynn's health under false pretences.

"Capital speaker, your cousin," said Mr. Carstairs to Caroline, as they returned to the ball-room. "He has given them a fright. They quite missed the irony, you know."

"Oh, it's only his chaff," said Dick, when questioned as to his cousin's intentions by some of his intimates. "There's nothing in it. He's not such a precious fool."

As for Lynn himself, his one desire now was to get out of the house, and to escape from Shawkirk. This latest episode had put the finishing-touch to his irritation. In his angry impatience, he forgot to claim the waltz which Gertrude had promised him.

"Gertrude," he said, "good-night—and good-bye. I am going."

"But why say good-bye, Arthur?"

"Because I shall have left Shawkirk before you come down to breakfast to-morrow—or rather, this morning. Say good-bye for me to Caroline. I suppose I may trust to Dick to bring you home?"

"Oh, yes. Good-bye, Arthur."

"Good-bye, Gertrude. I shall write you, whenever I have anything to say. Now, dance on and be happy. Good-bye."

And he passed downstairs, and out of the house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN ESCAPADE.

'LONE PEAKS' were now rising in the market, and with them rose Mr. Arden's financial reputation. There had been a time—while the Shawkirk election was in progress, and the prospects of the mine were at their gloomiest—when 'whispers' had made themselves heard in certain circles, concerning Mr. Arden and his affairs. But now these were silenced; or rather, changed into a murmur of applause. The reports of which Mr. Mallory had enjoyed a private view, issued later in the form of a circular to the shareholders, brought about the belief that the mine was a real mine, with veritable ore. So much faith men had in Mr. Arden's 'expert,' who was a man of note in

his way, and had plainly stated what his eyes had seen. But the circular, by itself, was not sufficient to send up Lone Peak stock. The mine, no doubt, was there; but the money to work it was not—so at least people said. The expert had spoken of splendid possibilities; but without money these could not be realised; and where was the money to come from? The capital had been all expended, and fruitlessly; so much was known. The new stock had at no time been in demand; and it was not thought that Mr. Arden and his co-directors either would or could throw capital into the undertaking sufficient to make it pay. Thus even the reports which Mr. Mallory had pronounced 'significant' left the stock much as it had been before.

Then it oozed out that in some way money —real money—had been put into the concern; and that the mine was being developed. Rumour had it that a great Capitalist, who had been to Nevada and had visited the mine, had shown his confidence in its success by taking shares to the extent of forty—fifty—

a hundred thousand pounds. Mr. Arden did not contradict these statements; he only smiled, and declared them to be 'exaggerated.' 'Lone Peaks' came gradually into demand. A sale of ore was talked of, to be followed by a dividend at the rate of 15—20—25—*x* per cent. Mr. Arden smiled, and said that these forecasts also were 'exaggerated;' and his manner of saying so heightened, in whomsoever heard him, the desire to become possessed of Lone Peak stock. Each day saw the stock quoted at a higher figure. At last it stood at par. Then Mr. Arden felt that he had triumphed—with the help of Arthur Lynn.

The Lone Peak silver mine had ever held the first place in Mr. Arden's affections, and did so still. But there was a more recent Project which had come to stand second in his regards, and on which he was now bestowing the utmost of his energy. The suggestion of this project had come from no less a person than Mr. Mallory. And it necessitated a meeting between the Editor of the *Forum* and Mr. Bonnamy Fowler, M.P.

Mr. Fowler was a well-known City man, and a director in sundry solidly-established companies. Financially, he was spoken of as 'a tower of strength'; so specially, indeed, had this epithet become his own, that he was known among his intimates as 'Old Babel.' Mr. Fowler sat for a rotten borough in the South of England, which had frequently fallen under the editorial scourge of Mr. Mallory. But Mr. Fowler bore the wielder of the scourge, personally, no malice; and Mr. Mallory, for his part, was quite prepared to sink the Member in the (City) Man.

Mr. Fowler was a man of middle age, and something more. His hair was black, his eyes were cavernous. He never spoke in the House, and rarely out of it. When he did speak, his words boomed away from his lips as if his voice were a thing entirely beyond his control. The meaning of his speech seemed to dwindle cloudily in the volume of superfluous sound. To deliver an epigram with such a voice would have been as idly ineffective as the discharge of a needle from an Arm-

strong gun. But Mr. Fowler never spoke in epigrams.

Mr. Mallory and Mr. Fowler were to meet for the first time, on the common ground of finance, at Mr. Arden's dinner-table. It was to be one of Mr. Arden's 'little dinners.' The ladies of Mr. Arden's family knew well what a 'little dinner' meant. It meant, as a rule, almost no conversation during the repast, and a late appearance of the gentlemen in the drawing-room afterwards—sometimes no such appearance at all. It was understood that business on these occasions preoccupied the guests and made them silent, until the ladies had retired. But with Mr. Mallory at the table, there was not much risk of silence.

Mr. Mallory sat down to dinner in his worst temper. The first person he had seen, on entering Mr. Arden's drawing-room, had been Mr. Dulcimer. That Mr. Dulcimer should be of the party was more than he could tamely bear. He had not come there to listen to sickly nothings; he had come to talk confidentially with two financiers on a matter

which then lay nearer his heart than all others. He looked on Mr. Dulcimer's presence as a distinct breach of faith on the part of Mr. Arden; and took no great pains to conceal his ire.

Mr. Arden himself was quite as much annoyed as the Tribune by this untoward addition to his guests. He could not, under present circumstances, be otherwise than civil to Mr. Dulcimer; but he owned to himself that he had of late had a good deal more of that gentleman's society than he could enjoy. Mr. Dulcimer was there that evening on the invitation of Mrs. Chevenix, not on his; had he known of it, he would have dined the M.P. and the Editor at his club, instead of at his house. Mr. Arden swore, inwardly, at the 'meddling old fool'—Mrs. Chevenix. It was she who had placed him in this false position —who had compromised him in the eyes of Mr. Mallory and Mr. Fowler. Had he designed to play a practical joke upon them, there would have been need of nothing more.

Mr. Fowler, for his part, was deeply per-

plexed by finding Mr. Dulcimer in that house. He had heard from Mrs. Chevenix that the young man was a poet. Poets he believed to be, as a class, dishevelled and insane. Mr. Dulcimer was the reverse of dishevelled; but he seemed, at all events, to possess the latter qualification. But what was Arden, of all men, doing with one of these unfortunates at his table? What operation of preternatural subtlety could this portend? There were, he reflected, such things as rhymed advertisements. Could it be that Arden had decided on carrying this idea into his mining and other prospectuses? Could this strange youth have been retained to sing up shares in the market?

During dinner, the Editor's wrath was fanned by Miss Arden's persistence in addressing him. She seemed resolved that the conversation should be general—that Mr. Dulcimer should not have the chance of whispering honeyed trivialities in her ear, under cover of the thunder of Mr. Fowler's voice, and the silvery cadences of Mr. Mallory's.

Few things gave Mr. Mallory less pleasure than Miss Arden's remarks. He disliked her, because he could not despise her. She ought to have been a fool, and was not. She had opinions of her own, which was bad. And, what was almost as bad, she did not believe in woman's rights—in other words, did not care for the right of listening reverentially to him, Mr. Mallory, while he declaimed on woman's wrongs. On various occasions she had offered to sing or play to him, as if he had been a lovesick dapperling —an offence not to be forgiven. And she had discovered a chink in the editorial armour. Of music and all that appertains thereunto Mr. Mallory was intimately ignorant. He was well aware, of course, that this reflected great credit on himself. But he did not like to have it discovered that there was anything under heaven which he had not carefully weighed before finding it wanting. Now Miss Arden seemed to find a malicious pleasure in beseeching his opinion on matters musical.

"To talk"—said Mr. Mallory, thus assailed —"to talk of extracting any meaning from music is absurd. You might as well talk of extracting money from moonlight. I look upon a musician as a social fungus. There is a deep truth in the old myth which represented—ah—well, an Individual who once had a great fall in society—as the First Violinist. This worship of sound merely deafens its devotees to the world-wail of Humanity."

"I don't think I should like to hear that," said Miss Arden; "I fancy the street-organs are preferable, after all."

"It lulls men into oblivion of their wrongs," Mr. Mallory swept on. "Look at the Italians —when they wished to allay a revolution at Naples, they had merely to bid the bands play. Look at the Germans—no people has sung more songs about liberty, and no people has ever had less of it. Music!—it is a social narcotic—a Lethe-flood of sound for the Serfs to lave in. There may be talent among the music-lovers—I do not know; but they

have, at all events, 'small talent for freedom.'"

"They didn't allay a revolution with the *Marseillaise*, did they?"—inquired Miss Arden innocently.

"As for that man Wagner of whom you spoke," Mr. Mallory went on, "I heard his Trilogy at Bayreuth—and all I can say of it is this, that it almost made me a good—ah—Catholic."

"How—how was that?"—inquired Mrs. Chevenix, startled by the word.

"It converted me, madam, for the moment to a belief in the Catholic—ah—Inferno. Amid that chaos of discordant sounds—that braying of the trumpet and the kettle-drum—I actually thought myself *there*."

Mrs. Chevenix shivered. She did not express the thought which Mr. Mallory's words had suggested.

The Editor was for a time silent, considering what topic was most likely to prove unpleasant to, at least, any two of the party. At last he spoke.

"By the way, Arden, I saw a friend of yours to-day—my late—ah—sub-editor, Mr. Lynn."

"Indeed," said Mr. Arden. "I thought he had vanished altogether. Did he tell you where he had been?"

Mr. Mallory saw that the topic was disagreeable to four of his auditors, and naturally pursued it.

"He has been at—ah—Shawkirk, Arden—his native town, you know. He called on me at my office to-day, and we had a most interesting conversation. I was deeply gratified by that young man's demeanour. He has very greatly improved."

"It would be strange if he had not," said Mr. Arden, "with all that money left him."

"You think so?"—said Mr. Mallory.

"Lynn?—money?"—thundered Mr. Fowler—"that's not the same man who holds that big lot of Lone Peaks, Arden? Man was speaking to me about him in the City, to-day."

"The same," said Mr. Arden, with something less than his usual suavity.

"Must be a clever fellow, that," continued Mr. Fowler. "Went into the thing at the right time. Should like to meet that fellow. Perhaps we may see him in the City, one of these days."

"That is unlikely," said Mr. Mallory. "If you want to meet this young man, Mr. Fowler, you will have to go to Charing Cross an hour or two hence—he leaves to-night for Paris. He intends to travel, in the meantime."

"Looking out for investments?"—suggested Mr. Fowler.

"No—he has had enough of that. Do you know, Arden, I was really impressed by the broadening effect of riches on your—ah—young friend? I spoke to him of his future career—of his making an entrance into the literary and political world. Yes—he is a young man who will yet go far."

"How far does Mr. Lynn intend going?"—asked Mr. Dulcimer.

"On the Continent," replied the Editor,

"he proceeds by Paris to Vienna. You might meet him there, Mr. Dulcimer, in, say, a fortnight. In literature, he will proceed, I believe, to the first rank. You will —ah—*hear* of his arriving there, Mr. Dulcimer, some ten years hence or so. In the meantime, he and I have resumed our old relations. He has re-enlisted under the inky flag of journalism."

Mr. Arden shot an admiring glance in the direction of Mr. Mallory, and a smile crept round the corners of his mouth. Mr. Mallory, with that Project in his view, must be playing the same game that he—Arden—had played. But Mr. Mallory's way of going to work was, he felt, "a cut above him" —there was a finesse, a depth, a delicacy of touch about it, to which he could not aspire. Mr. Arden owned that to himself, and honoured the great Editor.

But Mr. Dulcimer was far from smiling. The one thing that could have deepened his abhorrence of the Editor had been done. Had not Mr. Mallory sung the praises of his—

—Mr. Dulcimer's—former rival in the presence of Camilla? And had not Camilla seemed to hang with rapt interest on the Editor's words? Mr. Dulcimer became pale with rage.

"So soon!"—he sighed; "so soon! You pain me, Mr. Mallory, more than I can say. Poor Mr. Lynn!"

"I am sorry to have pained you, Mr. Dulcimer," said the Editor, "as I fear I have done by my reference to Mr. Lynn. But—pardon my dulness—I don't quite see what it is that makes Mr. Lynn an object of compassion in your eyes?"

"Can it be"—went on the Poet—"can it be that he has already lost his all?"

"If you mean his money, permit me to point out to you that, in Mr. Lynn's case, money is *not* his all. Neither, so far as I know, has he yet lost it."

"You relieve me," said Mr. Dulcimer, "but without lessening my surprise. I did not think it possible that any human being, however—eccentric, should have gone back

to the bondage of journalism while possessing an independence. That was my meaning. It may have been a fancy—a vain fancy of mine. But it came to me."

"My dear sir," said the Editor soothingly, "you must not give way to those sorts of fancies—you really must not. The collective sense of Humanity has, on such questions as this of journalism, pronounced a Fiat against which there is no appeal. In face of that Fiat, an individual prejudice is as impotent as the thistledown against the granite. No one, for example, understands why he should be consigned to a mad-house. Still, his prejudice is of no avail against the decision of the sane majority.—I need not say, of course, that I adduce this merely as an instance."

"Talking of mad-houses," interposed the deep-voiced Fowler, "I did very well in a mad-house, very well indeed."

Mr. Dulcimer shuddered. Mrs. Chevenix turned icy cold, and fixed a fascinated gaze on Mr. Fowler's knife.

"Yes," continued the M.P.; "did I ever

tell you, Arden, about that mad-house they started down in Hampshire, that I went into? I'm out of it now, you know—got out of it in the nick of time, but it was a good thing while it lasted. Rather a queer story, that—" and Mr. Fowler then proceeded to relate his lucrative experience as shareholder in a joint-stock private asylum. The conversation went on for some time on the same lines; but before the ladies rose, Mr. Mallory had contrived to revert to the talents, fortune, and bright prospects of his late sub-editor. Mr. Mallory was speaking now with a purpose in view beyond that of exasperating Mr. Dulcimer.

"Mr. Lynn, you see, Arden, will not be idle abroad," said Mr. Mallory.

"Indeed," said Mr. Arden. Mr. Arden was prepared to stand a good deal from Mr. Mallory, but the Editor's tacit assumption that he must be deeply interested—still—in Lynn's fortunes, was trying to his patience.

"No," went on Mr. Mallory, "he will not be idle. He intends to make a study of the working-classes in the great foreign towns, and

we have arranged for a series of letters in the *Forum*, regarding the various stages of vice and wretchedness in which their rulers compel them to exist. These letters will afterwards be published in a volume, which will no doubt be prized by all earnest political students. There is just one slight obstacle in the way. Mr. Lynn tells me that his German is not so good as it might have been. I am afraid that when he lived on the Continent, he made a too common mistake—frequented the society of his countrymen and — ah — countrywomen, more than was—ah—for his good."

Mr. Mallory, as he spoke, glanced across the table at Miss Arden. The glance was almost imperceptible, but Camilla knew that Mr. Mallory was watching her, and, for some reason of his own, had been talking at her. Slowly the blood mantled on her cheeks. Despite herself, she raised her head, and looked for an instant with a kind of defiance at Mr. Mallory. Then Mr. Mallory felt quite sure that he had not been talking in vain. He allowed the subject to drop; and con-

descended to listen for a time to Mr. Fowler's financial reminiscences.

"Camilla," said Mrs. Chevenix, as they went into the drawing-room, "what is wrong with you to-night? You were looking quite flushed a minute ago, and now you are as white as a statue. Are you unwell?"

"Oh, I don't know. I suppose I must be. That man always gives me a headache."

"I don't wonder at it. But Mr. Dulcimer was there, my dear."

"I think I shall go upstairs, Aunt Elizabeth, and bathe my face. I know I am looking a perfect fright. I can hardly keep my eyes open."

"A cup of strong tea" — began Mrs. Chevenix.

"Yes, yes. I shall be down in a few minutes. You can keep Mr. Dulcimer amused, aunt, until—until I come."

"Don't be long, my dear. These men will be talking their horrid business for an hour to come, and Mr. Dulcimer will expect you to give him some music."

Camilla went upstairs to her own room. She was trembling all over, and the throbbing of her temples was almost a pain. She cast one glance at the reflection of her face in the mirror; it was white as a statue, as her aunt had said.

With eager haste she took the jewels from her wrists and throat, slipped the rings from her fingers, and exchanged her dinner-dress for a plainer garment. Over all she threw a mantle lined with fur—the same she had worn that winter at Leipsic, and in which she had walked, driven, skated, along with Arthur Lynn.

Was there time?—Dinner had been served at an earlier hour than usual, to suit Mr. Mallory: and Mrs. Chevenix had understood too well what was required of her, to sit long over dessert. It was now not much after eight o'clock.—Charing Cross, that man had said. She had no very distinct idea of the time it might take to drive there. But there was at least an hour to spare—more, perhaps, for she had some notion that the train left between nine and ten.—Yes, there was time.

Silently she hurried downstairs, and past the door of the dining-room. She could hear the voices from within. In the hall there was only French, the impassive. She made a sign to the man, who opened the door for her—as if she were doing the most natural thing in the world, in going out unattended at that hour—without a word or a look of surprise. But when the door was shut, French gave expression to his thoughts in a long-drawn, significant whistle; and retired forthwith to the servants' hall, big with news.

The night was frosty, but not clear. A vaporous haze filled the air, and gave it a chill clammy feeling that made Camilla shiver in her furs. She dropped her veil over her face, and almost ran down the garden. Then she walked swiftly eastwards.

A hansom passed her before she had gone a hundred yards, but she could not summon up courage to hail it. Trembling with excitement, almost terrified by the strangeness of her situation—for she had never before found herself alone in the London streets by night—

she hastened on, choosing her way almost at random.

Presently another cab appeared—a four-wheeler this time, crawling along close by the kerb. One thing was plain to Camilla—that if she was to carry out the purpose she had formed, she must not go on any longer on foot. Time and strength alike were failing her, and already she had lost her way. She stopped the cab, and bade the man drive her to Charing Cross station—fast.

Up to this point she had acted altogether on impulse, unthinking, careless of consequences. Day by day since she had parted from Lynn the longing to see him again had grown upon her. Mr. Mallory had seemed to her the mouthpiece of Destiny. Those chance words of his, lightly spoken, were as a call which she must obey. Lynn was to be near her that night, before going beyond her reach, perhaps for ever. The prompting to seek him, to meet him once more, had become irresistible. She had not sought to resist it.

But now she began to hesitate. She was being driven very slowly towards her fate. "All right, miss"—the man had said, when she had bidden him drive his fastest; but his fastest proved to be a tardy trot. She doubted whether it were possible to reach the station in time. One touch on the check-string—and she might be home again before her flight had been discovered. Her aunt would be still asleep in the drawing-room—her father would be talking business over his wine—Mr. Dulcimer—no, she could not go back to Mr. Dulcimer. His attentions had become to her at all times little short of torture; and that evening they had been specially marked. She dropped the check-string, which she had taken in her hand. No, she would not go back; come of it what might, she would act on her impulse. However cold Lynn might be, he could not, knowing her as he did, despise her more deeply because she had come to bid him farewell, and to ask his forgiveness. One thing at least she could tell him—that never, *never* would she marry Mr.

Dulcimer—and that, in parting from himself, she had been striving to expiate rather than to heighten the wrong she had done him.—How would he receive her? What would he say?—She kept herself from thinking about that. And yet, when she had wrapt herself in those Leipsic furs, when she had slipped the jewels from her fingers, a wild hope had flashed across her mind that made her cheeks burn, as she strove to crush it down and hide it from herself. If he had suffered, had not she suffered too? Was her offending past forgiveness or forgetting? Might not his happiness, after all, be bound up inseverably with hers?—She strove to banish such thoughts from her mind. It was no such anticipation, she told herself, that was taking her now to where she might see him and speak with him; but simply an impulse which she could not control.—Her father had told her she was mad. Well, she was giving him reason to say so. He would be angry, furiously angry, she knew that. And Mr. Dulcimer?—She began to think of what, even now, might be happen-

ing at Hartington Gardens. Would they guess whither she had gone?

What happened at Hartington Gardens, after Camilla's departure, was this.

Mr. Dulcimer had not dallied long over his wine, after the ladies retired. "Thank Heaven, he's off at last!"—Mr. Arden had said, as his intended son-in-law muttered something about "music," and quitted the room—"now we can talk that business over at our ease. I think, Fowler, we had better let Mallory explain his project. Then you can ask him, or me, any questions that occur to you."

When Mr. Dulcimer entered the drawing-room, he found only Mrs. Chevenix, sleeping peacefully in an easy chair before the fire. This was, as Mr. Dulcimer knew, her habit on all occasions when he was there; and he glanced approvingly at his slumbering ally, without the slightest desire to awaken her. The piano stood open, with a music-book on it; doubtless Camilla would immediately appear. There was a portrait of her in the room—a head in crayons, exquisitely done—

and before that Mr. Dulcimer took his stand, in an attitude of tranced adoration. Ever and again his head was raised towards the picture; but as the minutes passed fruitlessly on, an expression of impatience began to alternate with the look of dreamy rapture which Mr. Dulcimer's features promptly assumed, at each fancied sound of a footstep or opening of a door. Camilla ought certainly to come, and at once, to witness this proof of his devotion. She did not come, however, and the Poet's mood passed from surprise into irritation. The pose was effective, but fatiguing; and finally he had to give it up.

Mr. Dulcimer was now very angry. He did not wish to arouse Mrs. Chevenix, as Camilla might appear at any moment. So he sat in silence, and nursed his wrath. This was not the kind of treatment which Mr. Dulcimer considered his due. He was in love with Camilla—very much in love, he thought. But he was not going to tolerate her caprices beyond a certain limit. She had come near that limit on sundry occasions already; now, decidedly,

she had overstepped it. Mr. Dulcimer knew his own value; the usage that might do for such as "that fellow Lynn," would not do at all for him. Camilla must be made to see that. He had been, perhaps, too tamely subservient; he had accepted his fair lady's whims too much in the courtier spirit. That must henceforth be changed. He would show her that he still laid claim to his liberty. He would threaten her with the loss of what she thought herself to hold so securely. He would bring her to her senses.—How should he make manifest his high displeasure? Should he quit the house there and then, without saying a word to anyone? Would that be a dignified manner of proceeding?—Mr. Dulcimer thought that, on the whole, it would. Nearly an hour had passed since he came upstairs; he had already waited far too long—he would wait no longer.—He rose to go—and, as he rose, the other gentlemen entered the room. Mrs. Chevenix awoke with a start.

"What, Dulcimer"—said Mr. Arden—"all alone? Why, where's Camilla?"

The Poet did not answer. Mrs. Chevenix, with a startled look which everyone noticed, said something about going to see what had become of her—and went. The minutes passed; a general feeling that something was wrong began to pervade the group in the drawing-room; still Mrs. Chevenix did not return. Presently French glided into the room, and said to Mr. Arden that Mrs. Chevenix desired to see him.

"One would think the house was bewitched!"—said Mr. Arden angrily. He apologised to his guests, and hurried upstairs. In his daughter's room he found Mrs. Chevenix, now on the verge of hysterics.

"Now, then," he cried, "will you tell me what the Devil you mean? What have you done with that mad girl? What's the matter now?"

"Oh, Robert!"—murmured Mrs. Chevenix, "did I not warn you? Did I not warn you against that man?"

"What man?—Where's Camilla? That's what I want to know!"

"That—that Infidel! It's all the doing of that wicked man downstairs!—that unbeliever!—that"—

"Oh, confound it!"—broke in Mr. Arden. "Once more, I ask you, where's my—"

Here his glance fell on Camilla's dinner-dress, lying a crushed heap of white drapery on the floor; and on the rings and bracelets that were scattered about the dressing-table. —"By Heaven!"—he cried—"she's gone off with the other fellow, after all!"

"Yes—that's what she has done! Oh, dear! What will Mr. Dulcimer say!"

"D—n Mr. Dulcimer," said Mr. Arden. Mrs. Chevenix put her fingers to her ears.

Mr. Arden did not speak for some minutes. He was inwardly reviewing the situation.

"Where do you suppose she has gone?"—he said at last. "Be rational, now. Don't stand gibbering like a lunatic, but just tell me what you know—and be sharp about it!"

"Did you not hear what that wicked wretch said at your own table—I believe on purpose to make mischief—about the train from

Charing Cross, for Paris?—and about that—that insolent Scotchman, that you *would* bring here?"

"Lynn?"

"Yes—Lynn. She has run away with him, I know it!—She has brought disgrace upon us all!"

"Stuff!"—said Mr. Arden. "It takes two to run away, and that young fellow is not mad, though *she* is. But you've made a nice mess of it, between you!—Now, look here, this is what I shall do. I shall go after her, and bring her back quietly. This must be hushed up at all costs, and if I find you letting out a word of what you know, by the Lord—"

"But what am I to tell these people downstairs? What am I to say?"

"Tell them any lie you please," said Mr. Arden. "But stay—you'd better leave Dulcimer to me. Send him out to me—I'll make it right with him. Now, *will* you look sharp?—It's nine now, and the train leaves at nine twenty-five. There's not a moment to spare!"

But it was too late to "make it right" with Mr. Dulcimer. That gentleman had already left the house, after exchanging a few words with French in the hall—left it, not intending to return. Mr. Arden surmised as much; and set forth, furious, in quest of his runaway daughter.

A few minutes afterwards, Mr. Mallory and Mr. Fowler left Hartington Gardens together. Mr. Mallory, without much difficulty, had elicited the facts of the case from Mrs. Chevenix. In her agitation, she had even let it be seen what share in the matter she ascribed to Mr. Mallory.

Mr. Mallory's enjoyment of the recent incident was tempered by the thought that, should this scandal get into the society journals, his name might possibly be mixed up with it. This was the view suggested to him by Mr. Fowler.

"Say!"—boomed Mr. Fowler, who had not neglected his host's wines—"know what they'll say? They'll say you were the young people's *go-between!* Never thought of that before!"

"I don't see why you should think of it now," said Mr. Mallory.

"Well, the old lady seems to have got some notion of that kind into her head, you know. And I do remember your saying something about the station, and this Linton, or whatever his name is, going away. These newspaper fellows get hold of everything nowadays. Shouldn't wonder a bit if they said you'd a hand in it."

Mr. Mallory shuddered. "It is a topic I cannot discuss," he said frigidly.—"A *go-between!* Good God!"—muttered the Tribune to himself, as he walked away to his office, after bidding Mr. Fowler adieu.

Meanwhile Camilla had reached the station. She had come too soon, and the necessity of waiting took away from her all the courage of impulse. Passing into the white glare of the electric lights, she was seized with a nervous dread of recognition. It seemed to her excited fancy as though the place had been lit up expressly that all eyes might behold her in her humiliation. For she felt it now a

humiliation to have come to such a place on such an errand; and yet, having come, she found herself unable to give up her purpose, and go back. She was scared by the spectral brilliance, confused by the hurry and noise, by the throng of moving figures and their shadows, black and defined. She shrank away from the crowd to a quiet place, by herself; and waited, trembling.

The time passed on, and the stir on the platform increased. She made a resolve. She would find out the train; go once and back again along the line of carriages; then, if this search proved fruitless, she would return home—abased only in her own eyes.

This she did; moving along the line of carriages, but without finding in any of them the face she sought. The impulse which urged her to be gone was now as strong upon her as ever that which had brought her from her father's house had been. She turned, and walked swiftly away from the platform.

Two gentlemen came straight towards her, walking leisurely, arm-in-arm. They were

talking and laughing together. Camilla's heart gave a wild leap within her. She had recognised one of them. It was Lynn himself.

"And as I was telling you, Vaughan"—she heard him say—"I had to open the ball with the man's daughter—"

The words were a shock to Camilla, in her present mood. Instinctively, she turned aside her head, and drew her veil more closely over her face. She would not have him recognise her; and yet—with an inconsistency of which she was scarcely aware—she made a little pause. Lynn's glance fell upon her; he knew her at once, in a moment. He started violently; the words died upon his lips; and he stood motionless before her.

"Good God!"—he said. "Is it you—Camilla?"

Mr. Vaughan dropped his friend's arm, and walked slowly down the platform.

"I—I came to say good-bye"—faltered Camilla. "I heard only to-night, by chance,

that you were going away. I wanted to see you again, to say—good-bye."

"Good-bye"—said Lynn; but she did not offer him her hand, and neither of them moved.

"And there is something more I wanted to say to you—something I have wished to ask you, ever since that night when I . . . . Oh, Arthur, do you think you will ever—not now, but after—be able to forgive me?"

"I have done it," said Lynn. "The last time we met, Camilla, I thought too much of myself. I said things that I was sorry for afterwards—"

"They were true—all true!"

"Perhaps, but I should not have said them. Since then—during these last weeks—I have thought more of you."

"How—how have you thought of me, Arthur?"—The tone in which she asked this question was so low he scarcely heard it. He could see that she was trembling.

"Why did you come here to-night, Camilla?—why did you come? You do not

know how much harder you make it for me to bear—what I have to bear!"

"I came because I must. I could not help it. Are you angry with me for coming?—Do you despise me more deeply than you did before?—Say what you will—I cannot blame you."

"Camilla—you wring my very heart when you say such things?"

"I had to see you—if only for once—after. . . . Arthur, you cannot think I knew of it?—that I knew what—what my father had done?"

"If you say you did not, I shall believe you."

"I did not—I could say that if it were with my latest breath! I have been wicked—mercenary—I have deceived you. But *that*—of that I was innocent! . . . . Say that you believe me, Arthur, for pity's sake!"

In her agitated pleading, she had laid her ungloved hand on his sleeve. Lynn could feel how it was shaking; and a great compassion for her filled his heart.

"I do believe you," he said. It was all he could trust himself to say.

"I could not bear to have you think that I had a share in—in robbing you, Arthur. Oh, yes—that is what it comes to—let me call it by its proper name! . . . . That was why I said those things to you, the last night we met. I never meant to marry that man—I do not mean to marry him, or—or any one. The shame of it all had made me mad, I think. I wanted to send you away from me, so that you would never come back—never care to see me again. I thought myself stronger than I am, you see—else I would not be here. You told me that night that I had made the past as bitter to you as the future must be. Did you mean that?—Do you say so still?"

"How can I say otherwise? Is it not too true?"

"And do you think that I, too, have not suffered?—that the future is not as likely to be bitter for me as for you?"

"What do we know about the future?

It may be that neither you nor I shall ever find happiness again—or it may not be. But it can do no good, Camilla, to me, nor to you, to speak of what has been between us in the past."

"No good?"

"None. You know what you once were to me—what you once made my life for me. I shall never know anything so sweet as the old days were—that I will tell you. But I look on those days as gone—past recalling."

"Past recalling?—Arthur, I see you are unhappy—as I am. You used to tell me I was very proud?—See what I have come to! I am shamed in my own eyes. I am shamed in yours."

"No—a thousand times no!"

"Arthur, I have done you a great wrong. I have deceived you—I have twice sent you from me—but I loved you through it all! If you could see into my heart, you would believe it—you would know it! . . . . Yes, it is right that I should sacrifice my pride. I

do it for your sake, believe me, more than for my own.—Arthur, can't you understand me?"

"Camilla," said Lynn, speaking very gently, and in a voice as low as her own had been, "if I offered you my love again, and you —took me at my word, I could not, Camilla, I could not trust myself. It would not be the old love. It would be another passion, and in time it might bring great sorrow on us both. This may seem to you hard and cold—but it is true. Do you know, at this moment I feel I could give all I have—all this money that has lost me *you*—if we could only be to one another as we were when I was a penniless student? If you had been less to me in the past—I don't know—it might have been otherwise. But I have loved you too well, too dearly—to let me offer you the only love I could offer now."

"That is enough," said Camilla; "good-bye. I was told lately that I had gone mad. After what I have done to-night I begin to believe it.—Oh, no, no!"—she cried in a changed voice—"I have no right

to speak so—I have deserved it all! But I *had* to see you again, Arthur—and now you understand me better, a little better than you did—don't you? You won't think so meanly of me, when you think of the past at all?"

"I shall think of you as you were on the day we first met—floating down that quiet German river in the twilight—when I looked into your eyes, and knew. . . . No, I cannot bear the thought of it! Camilla, why—why did you not trust me fully, as I trusted you? If you had, we should not now be saying —farewell!"

He took her hand in his; and the mere touch of it roused a feeling within him that threatened to sweep away the barrier of his self-control. The dusky splendour of her eyes, now languorous, now burning—the music of her voice, that had once thrilled his very being—the subtle fragrance that hung about her—the very furs she wore—how well he knew them!—was not this the Camilla of the old days—the same Camilla?

Where was the change? He did not release her hand, and a great wave of emotion began to swell within him. To reject her, now that she had come back to him thus—would it not be an act at once cold-blooded and quixotic?—Why should he choose a cold and colourless life, because he knew that his love could be no longer the exalting, spiritual passion it had once been? Why should he sacrifice the real to the ideal?—It was true that Camilla had deceived him, that his faith in her could never be restored. But was it not worth his while to take the risk of being deceived again, for the sake of possessing such a deceiver?—As he stood drinking in her dark loveliness, inhaling the perfume of her very presence, a new light came into his eyes. He began to draw her towards him. But she shrank back, and her face crimsoned deeply under his gaze.

"Arthur!"—she said—"after the words you have spoken, if you hold my hand an instant longer, it will be an insult! Arthur, you are cruel—you make me feel myself de-

graded! Let me go—have mercy, and let me go!"

Lynn stood for a moment, still holding her hand. There was a struggle plainly written on his face; his lips moved, but no words came. Then lingeringly, very lingeringly, he released the hand he had been holding tight in his. At last—"Yes, go!"—he said—"There is yet time!"

She broke from him, and passed swiftly through the crowd. Lynn stood looking after her. She had not gone far before he saw a gentleman hasten up to her—a flushed, excited gentleman, whose loose top-coat was flung back so that his evening-dress was shown—Mr. Arden. Lynn saw Mr. Arden catch his daughter's arm, and hurry her away through the crowd. He stood looking after them till they were lost to view. Then Vaughan tapped him on the shoulder. "Time's all but up, my dear fellow," he said; "I've secured a place for you, and seen to your luggage. You have not a moment to spare." Lynn followed him mechanically towards the train.

"Have you come to take me home?"—said Camilla to her father. "You don't need to seize hold of me like that—I am quite ready to go now."

"Are you not afraid to speak to me?"—panted Mr. Arden, almost inarticulate, between haste and fury. "Home? You don't deserve one! Come away out of this at once!—Where's a cab?—You unnatural, ungrateful, shameless girl! Do you know what you have done?"

"Yes. I have said what I came here to say."

"And the young man didn't say what you wanted him to say! He didn't ask you to take a trip abroad with him?"

"You forget—he is a gentleman."

"At any rate, I know now he isn't a fool. I can't say the same of you. What view do you suppose Dulcimer will take of this nice escapade of yours?"

"I don't care much about Mr. Dulcimer's views."

"The man you are going to marry?—at least, if he'll take you now, which I must say

is not likely. I for one could not hold him to his bargain, after this!"

"You will not need. I am not going to marry Mr. Dulcimer."

"So this is another of your cursed caprices? —But you've kicked over the traces once too often, I can tell you. I shan't have you any longer on *my* hands, disgracing me before my friends! I know the proper person to look after you—not a born fool like your Aunt Elizabeth. You'll go off to a very different sort of house—and you'll go with a character!"

"You can't let me go too soon."

"Your Aunt Katherine's the proper person to have charge of you. Yes, you shall go to Lingford—it's the dullest hole in all England, by God!—You won't find any young men there to jilt one day and run after the next. *She'll* look well after you. There's no male creature ever enters *her* door!"

"I tell you again, you can't send me too soon."

"You shall go to-morrow, my dear. But you'll very soon change *that* tune. Before a

week's over, you'll be crying your eyes out to get back again—and, mark my words, *you shan't get!*—Come, get into the cab. I won't have you make an exhibition of *me* any longer. *I've* still got a reputation to keep up, you know!"

. . . . .

Lynn took his seat as the train was on the point of starting. Vaughan made no allusion to the curious scene of which he had chanced to be the witness.

"Write me from Vienna," he said; "and remember, we look for rattling letters—short sentences with a fact in each—and we'll '*lead out*' the first half-column! There's something to live for!—Good-bye, my dear fellow. Have a good time, if you can—and, remember, our expectations are high!"

Before he reached Dover Lynn told himself that he had that night won a victory over which he might congratulate himself, dear as it had cost him. He could not, in his present state of feeling, foresee a day when he would be able to think of Camilla Arden with indifference.

More than that, he could not believe that he would ever know real happiness without her. But he saw that, had they not parted as they had done, a worse thing than either had known as yet might have befallen both of them. A love such as Lynn's had been for Camilla—when no longer consecrated by such perfect trust, such reverence for the ideal as his had been—is as a flower that becomes poisonous when it has lost its perfume.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FURTHER VIEWS OF MR. MALLORY.

During his second visit to the Continent, Lynn worked hard at the letters he had promised to write for the *Forum*. Indeed, he was surprised by his own industry, when he remembered how differently he had passed his time in Germany a year ago. Then, his head had been full of song and legend and *clair de lune*. Now, his thoughts ran on such matters as wages, hours of labour, rent, taxes, and strikes.

His new studies were, perhaps, as hard as ever he had found exact science. But then, he could neglect them without jeopardising his future. He might be as idle as he could endure, and the voice of the homilist would never be uplifted. No one could constrain him to

visit a manufactory rather than a picture gallery; or to go to a workman's club in preference to the opera. So he cheerfully went through tasks which would have seemed irksome to the last degree in the days when work had been imperative.

He received from Mr. Mallory more than one letter, congratulating him on his communications to the *Forum*. "The writing," said Mr. Mallory, "is very good indeed. You have the journalist's love of facts, and the artist's selective faculty. Your letters on *The War of Tendencies* and *Bureaucracy against Democracy* have a more than passing interest. Those you have entitled *The Tax of Blood* and *Disbarrack!* are, in their way, admirable; indeed, I have made them, as you will see, the basis of a leading article. Your letters should be expanded and issued in a volume, which would, no doubt, be highly prized by all earnest political thinkers."

The day when such words would have thrilled Lynn with joy had passed. For him, wealth had depreciated the currency of com-

pliment. No doubt the outward signs of love and friendship—hand-clasps and tender glances and soft whispers, kind words of praise and brave words of comfort—must have a higher value to the man with a hundred a year than to the man with a hundred thousand. The latter cannot feel so sure of his market when he seeks to buy the things that are to be bought only without money and price. Now Lynn was eccentric enough to have this feeling, and to be troubled by it. He was in no way elated by Mr. Mallory's words of praise; he took them for what they were worth; but, at the same time, they gave him a certain satisfaction. There was, then, a kind of work which he could do; in which, with time, he might even come to excel. The thought was comforting to Lynn, in his present state of mind. "The problem before me," he said to himself, "is this—Can I gain for myself a position in which I shall be regarded as something more than Hume's legatee? Am I to rise superior to my wealth, or is it to drag me down? Because I am rich in pocket, must I

be poor in heart and soul?—sceptical of admiration, of sympathy, of love—of all save what the hands can touch and the eyes see?

Lynn very soon had proof, if such were needed, that from his relatives at least no obsequious overtures would come. There was a letter of his with which he felt more than usually satisfied, when he re-read it in the columns of the *Forum*. As it was mainly descriptive, Lynn thought he would send the paper in which it appeared to his cousin Gertrude. Gertrude had always sympathised with him in his dreams of literary success. She was, indeed, the only one of all his friends who had ever done so.—Camilla had at no time shown any such interest or sympathy. Lynn remembered that now; and there passed through his mind one of those comparisons which are swift, almost, as an intuition. —"Yes," he said to himself, "that bit about the *Judengasse* does not read badly. And my uncle is much interested in the Jews. And I think Gertrude would like it. Yes, I'll send her the paper."

Lynn awaited an answer from his cousin with more eagerness than he might have cared to admit. But no answer came. "Gertrude is offended," thought Lynn. "Her pride is hurt. She will not write to me because of what passed at that miserable ball." And Lynn owned to himself that the manner of his leave-taking on that occasion had been such as might have given any ordinary girl some cause of offence. But Gertrude!—he had thought that she understood him—that she had felt with him in that overmastering sense of irritation which had driven him forth from Mr. Macritchie's house. It was not like Gertrude to take offence; it was still less like her to be unforgiving. Lynn's thoughts came back to this point somewhat frequently, during the days that passed without bringing any answer from his cousin.

At last a letter came—a letter from Mr. Ingleby, so curt and frigid as to be almost a message of renunciation. Mr. Ingleby stated that he had felt it to be his Duty to consign the *Forum* which Lynn had sent, unread, to

the flames. He forbade his nephew to send another copy of that journal to his, Mr. Ingleby's, house. In conclusion, he expressed a wish that, so long as Lynn did the work of the man Mallory, all correspondence between himself and his relatives should cease.

This letter at once pleased Lynn, and pained him. It pleased him inasmuch as it explained the reason of Gertrude's silence; and also because it so fully exonerated his uncle of any disposition to truckle to his, Lynn's, wealth. It pained him because it seemed to cut him adrift so completely from his only kinsfolk. At the same time, he had no intention of sacrificing his own ambition to his uncle's prejudice. What had Mr. Ingleby to offer him, in exchange for all he must give up in breaking with Mr. Mallory?

When his uncle's letter came to him, Lynn had been abroad for nearly three months. A like interval passed before he again found himself in London, and during that time he had heard no tidings of his relatives in Shawkirk.

One of the first things which he did on returning to town was to call at the office of the *Forum*. In the sub-editor's room he found his former colleagues, Vaughan and Sugden, who gave him welcome. The aspect of the place seemed pleasantly familiar to Lynn—now that he was no longer compelled to breathe that gaseous atmosphere, or toil through those heaps of 'flimsies' which littered the table as of yore. Vaughan and Sugden, too, were unchanged in their manner towards him; they greeted him as one of the brotherhood, and nothing more. As he stood talking with them, however, he fancied that a change had, somehow, come over the spirit of the scene. The *Forum* office seemed pervaded by a feeling of repose to which he had been quite unaccustomed during his nights of suffering there. The hoist remained quiescent in its wooden pillar. The reporters came and went with a dignified slowness. The night-foreman still demanded 'copy,' but without threatening or reproach. From the room on one side of Sugden's came a sound as of men laughing

together; and from that on the other side was heard one who whistled an operatic air. Everything seemed to betoken a relaxation of the rigid discipline of other days. Mr. Sugden seemed unusually disposed to neglect his 'copy' for conversation; and Mr. Vaughan had a lighted cigar between his lips. Now in Lynn's day to have smoked in that room at that hour would have been well-nigh as insensate a deed as to have smoked in a powder-mill or a cathedral.

"Is this the *Forum* office?" said Lynn; "or is the Editor away on a very long holiday? The porter told me that he was in his room."

"He told you truly," said Vaughan. "The Chief—I should rather say the Captain—is at present engaged in an important duty. He is scuttling the ship. That, as you are aware, is always an operation of extreme delicacy. On this occasion, however, we believe it will be performed to the satisfaction of all—even, I may say, of the under-writers."

"Do you mean by that that Mallory is giving up the *Forum?*"

"Ay, ay, sir! We are, I tell you, scuttling the old craft, before we hoist the Jolly Roger on a new one."

"Have you not heard, Lynn?" said Sugden. "There's to be a new paper."

"It is to attack everything and everybody," continued Vaughan. "We—the Chief, Sugden, and myself—are to transfer to it our invaluable services. The British Constitution, I believe, is to come down; but my salary is to go up."

Lynn had already sent in his card to Mr. Mallory; and at this point was summoned to the Editor's room.

He was received by Mr. Mallory in a manner suggestive of deep but restrained satisfaction. The lowered tone and significant inflection of Mr. Mallory's voice, the grave gladness of his countenance, the firm clasp of his hand—all indicated an appreciation of Lynn's services, a gratification at his return, as at a long-looked for event which brought a positive relief to the editorial mind —too profound to be expressed, but which

such an one as Lynn could, of course, be trusted to infer.

Then Mr. Mallory made a little speech. He hoped that Lynn would at once act upon his suggestion regarding those singularly able letters. They should certainly be re-published in book-form. He had no hesitation in saying that the author of those letters would yet become a Literary Force which would have to be reckoned with. To which remarks Lynn replied that he was quite satisfied with the publicity already given to his articles, and had no wish to seek to extend it; whereon Mr. Mallory shook his head, raised his eyebrows, and shifted the conversation.

After a brief interchange of opinions—that is, of phrases—on Continental politics, Lynn rose to take his leave. But Mr. Mallory detained him.

"Stay a moment, Mr. Lynn," he said. "I should like to have some private conversation with you—not here, where I am constantly being intruded on, and have my hands filled with work. I should like to have a talk

with you on certain affairs of, I venture to think, more than personal importance—a talk at leisure. Could you breakfast with me at my chambers, on Saturday, at eleven o'clock?"

Lynn accepted the invitation; and made a note of Mr. Mallory's address.

"I shall be delighted to see you, delighted indeed," said Mr. Mallory. "Must you go now? Ah, well, I shall not seek to detain you—the fact is, at this juncture I have scarcely a moment I can call my own. This paper is engrossing my attention at present. Good-bye, my dear sir, good-bye."

"Left scuttling," thought Lynn, as he returned to Mr. Sugden's room. There he learned a good deal more from Vaughan and Sugden regarding Mr. Mallory's new departure. Mr. Mallory had of late, as Vaughan phrased it, "been going in for the Free Lance lay." The Government had not done what he had said they would do. They had proved him a false prophet, and so made it his duty

to prove them false legislators. Accordingly, the *Forum* appeared daily with a fresh attack on one or another member of the Cabinet. An exuberantly moral oration of the Prime Minister's was described by Mr. Mallory as the Carmagnole of Cant. A certain Secretary of State was alluded to as a Bobadil-Pecksniff; while one of this statesman's colleagues was reminded that the Whig element in a Liberal Administration is merely the lead ballast which enables the ship to carry more canvas and sail closer to the wind. All this was trying to the proprietors of the *Forum*, one of whom was Lord Primavere, the young noble still in his Radical stage, beloved of the men of Shawkirk. Now Lord Primavere had a deeper admiration of the Prime Minister than of any living creature, with the exception of the flying Belle Poule. And the Whig who had been rebuked for declining to see himself in the light of ballast was a particular friend of Lord Primavere's. And Lord Primavere himself had of late dreamt dreams of a prospective Under-Secretaryship.

And his connection with the *Forum* was an open secret; a fact which greatly increased his alarm and indignation at the new attitude taken up by the paper. To all protests, however, the Editor turned a deaf ear; and when the proprietors exchanged the tone of remonstrance for one of command, Mr. Mallory at once resigned his office. He could not, however, be immediately got rid of; and as he scouted the idea of writing against his convictions until the expiry of his term of power, Lord Primavere's life was for some weeks made well-nigh a burden unto him. Each morning he opened the *Forum* with a shudder, and read it with a groan. That it should appear daily with fresh gibes at the great Leader—that its utterances should be quoted with approving, but sardonic, comments in the Tory journals—was hard to bear. But that was not the worst. A day was drawing nigh whereon Lord Primavere was to open a Liberal Club, and expound politics to a provincial audience. And as Mr. Mallory would not be severed from the *Forum* before that

day came, there seemed every likelihood of his Lordship's speech being subjected to satire in the columns of his Lordship's paper. How often had Lord Primavere rejoiced in Mr. Mallory's command of irony, when the common enemy had been under the lash! Now he trembled, as he bethought him of its sting.

As for Mr. Mallory, he was in no way annoyed at the rupture brought about by what he called his Independence. For some time back he had clearly seen that something of the kind must happen. He had spoken of it months ago to Mr. Arden and certain other of his friends as a 'contingency;' and had taken all his measures to meet it. He could do perfectly well without the *Forum;* but he did not think that the *Forum* could continue to exist without him. During the last fortnight of his reign he relaxed somewhat the stringency of his discipline in the office; but he himself worked as hard as ever to the end. When Mr. Vaughan described his Chief as occupied in 'scuttling the ship,' he, perhaps,

did Mr. Mallory less than justice. The articles which then adorned the *Forum* were, it is true, audaciously inconsistent with its previous utterances. But then Mr. Mallory never wrote a thing because he believed it. He believed it because he had written it. That any product of his pen could do aught but good, was an idea he was incapable of grasping. It was possible that his articles might compromise the *Forum*. It was impossible that they could fail to advance the cause of Progress and Truth.

"You observe that sole, Mr. Lynn?" said Mr. Mallory to his guest, as breakfast on the appointed Saturday was drawing to a close. "Because the former proprietor of that sole is at present one of the proprietors of the *Forum*. You may have heard his name—Mr. Billing."

"I have—seen the name," said Lynn; "but I did not know until now that its owner had any connection with the paper."

"There were reasons—ah—why it should not be obtruded on public attention. The

man is a fishmonger—a Philistine—ah—naturally, a worshipper of Dagon. The other proprietors, as you may be aware, are Lord Primavere, poor fellow, and Mr. Hoseason, the bill-broker. You wonder why I should trouble you with these details, Mr. Lynn?"

"I don't doubt you have a good reason for doing so," said Lynn.

"I have," said Mr. Mallory. "These details have an important bearing on the matter I wish to discuss with you.—Well, to return to our—ah—proprietors. My relations with this curiously assorted trio, I may say to you, have been until lately of a satisfactory nature. However, some few weeks ago they did me the honour of calling upon me together. And what do you suppose was the object of this visit? It was to expostulate—yes, actually to expostulate with me in regard to the attitude taken up by the *Forum* towards the Government!"

Lynn expressed due surprise at this heinous conduct, and Mr. Mallory resumed:—

"The interview, I believe, was a painful one for some of those present. I had, you see, to point out to this grotesque triumvirate the impossibility of satisfying the wishes of each of its members. 'You, Lord Primavere,' I observed, 'desire that the paper should contain *verbatim* reports of each and all of your speeches, along with articles—ah—explanatory of their merits. You, Mr. Billing, wish the paper to retain a large circulation. Clearly, then, your object is incompatible with your partner's. Then again, Mr. Billing,' I said, 'you wish the *Forum* to support the Government in all things; whereas Mr. Hoseason wishes to render it a great advertising medium, with no more political influence than Holloway's pills. Do I interpret your views correctly, Mr. Hoseason?'—I said to him. Mr. Hoseason said with a kind of enthusiasm that I interpreted his views perfectly; and Mr. Billing became impassioned, raising his voice and dropping his H's as if they had been his old friends. The result of the interview has been—but possibly you may have heard of

that already, Mr. Lynn, since your return to town?"

"I have heard," said Lynn, "that you are about to give up the editorship."

"You have been correctly informed. In a few days I shall cease to edit the *Forum*. I do not regret it. Indeed, I have all along been troubled by doubts as to the propriety of any connection with a member of the Hereditary Chamber. But enough of the past; what I wish to talk of with you, Mr. Lynn, is the future. I intend shortly to assume the editorship of a new paper. It will be named the *London*, and will be absolutely unfettered by the bonds of party. Now, Mr. Lynn, it has occurred to me that the founding of this new paper may exercise a weighty influence upon your career."

"In what way, Mr. Mallory?"

"In this way. The proprietors of the new organ will be myself and a few of my friends —men who trust me too well, and, I may say, know me too well for any possibility of discord to arise. Among those friends, Mr.

Lynn, I should be gratified to include yourself. I have, I may tell you, perfect confidence in the future of the *London*."

"I have no doubt your confidence will be justified," said Lynn.

"Nor have I," said Mr. Mallory; "none whatever. Nor have those friends of mine, of whom I spoke to you. They have thrown their money into this undertaking, expecting a return—a large return; and they will not be disappointed. But that, Mr. Lynn, is not the inducement I would hold out to you."

"That would be no inducement to me," said Lynn.

"I know it," said Mr. Mallory. "I do not talk to you as I would to the Billings or Hoseasons. You have wealth, but you have also brains."

Lynn had to restrain an inclination to smile. Mr. Mallory, he knew, would as soon have thought of complimenting a mere sub-editor on his 'brains' as he would of asking him to breakfast.

"I intend to be very frank with you," the

Editor went on; "I shall show you my whole hand. My desire is to associate you with what I believe will be one of the great Forces of the Future. If I were to say that I was prompted in that desire by pure friendship, by a single-eyed interest in your success, you might, perhaps, suspect me of insincerity?"

"I might, perhaps," said Lynn.

"And therefore," said Mr. Mallory, "I do not say it. No, Mr. Lynn. When a man has devoted his life, as I have done, to the Cause of the People, he learns to repress his natural feelings in the case of individuals who may awaken his interest. So I tell you frankly that I make this suggestion to you for the sake of the Cause I have at heart. I recognise in you one who might be an adherent of the first importance."

Lynn shook his head. "I fear you are mistaken in me," he said. "I really can't discover what my own views are. You have something in your leading article this morning about 'flaccid solids' and 'viscous fluids'—"

"The phrase is not mine," said Mr. Mallory; "still, it is good."

"It describes with something like accuracy the state of my political opinions. I used to be a fiery Radical, but I have lost that fine frenzy now. And I'm afraid I differ from you, Mr. Mallory, with regard to the treatment of individuals. I don't believe any longer in doing good *en bloc*. If I can help a man here, and another man there, it will content me. I have my father's fate to warn me against philanthropic projects."

"Such projects are foredoomed to failure," said Mr. Mallory. "If you try to stop the driving-wheel of Industrialism by your own unaided strength, you will, of course, be pulverised. You must act on the engineer. In other words, we must act by the Press and the Platform—and especially by the Press—on our legislators. And we, who have given ourselves to the service of Humanity, must see to this—that our sympathy is not dissipated. We must not allow our energy and ardour to be frittered away in isolated deeds

of charity—in petty subventions to this or that individual. It is painful to resist the temptation—that I know well. But the impulse must be crushed, if we would really benefit the mass of our fellows."

"I don't know that I have given myself to the service of Humanity," said Lynn. "I should like, of course, to do what little I could to make people happier, if I knew how. But I don't pretend to understand this idea of Humanity as a thing to be worshipped. I must say I find most men rather selfish, thoroughly commonplace, and not a little tiresome—as I have no doubt most men find me."

"A man may be a democrat without being a demophile," said Mr. Mallory drily. "That, however, is beside the point. Your wish, Mr. Lynn, I assume to be this—to discover a line of work congenial to your tastes, and adapted to your new position?"

"That is my wish, most certainly."

"Naturally. All men—that is, all men who are not mere appendages to an eyeglass—

really care nothing for what is called 'pleasure.' What they really care for is Work—and Power. Now, Mr. Lynn, when you came to town you looked forward, I doubt not, to finding a joy in fighting your way upward?"

"I did," said Lynn. "I knew a happiness then which I have not known since. I feel, since this money came to me, as if the ground were cut away beneath my feet. I feel myself a poorer man, by so many thousand pounds. It is as if Fortune had given with her right hand, and taken away with her left—and more than she gave. You have read me correctly, Mr. Mallory."

"I judged you from myself," said the Editor. "You feel as if an accident had deprived you of your aim in life. It is not so, as I shall show you. Suppose, now, that you were to connect yourself with the *London*, and to devote yourself to political writing in its columns, and elsewhere. In a few years, you would become known as an independent thinker and a powerful controversialist. You would form the acquaintance of men whom it

is an honour to know. And you would have the consciousness that you were engaged in the highest work to which a man can devote himself."

"Party polemics, Mr. Mallory?"

"No — the vindication of the oppressed classes. For my part, Mr. Lynn, I do not take a high view of literature divorced from politics and sociology. Indeed, I believe that even the work of the poet will come to be recognised as of distinctly lower value than the work of the publicist."

"I can't go with you so far as that," said Lynn. "I rather hold, with Sir Philip Sidney, that 'the poet is the monarch of all sciences.'—By poetry, of course, I don't mean the fruits of that 'culture' which has cut itself off from both deep thought and practical life."

"We have seen, both of us," said Mr. Mallory, "a melancholy instance of the 'culture' you speak of, in that unhappy dweller in the sty of Epicurus—Dulcimer, I think his name was?—Yes, Dulcimer. Let *me* make the laws

of a people, Mr. Lynn, and he shall certainly *not* make its songs!—By the way, your friend Arden—"

"He is not a friend of mine."

"No?—Your—ah—former friend Arden has lost the poet for a son-in-law, have you heard?"

"I have heard so," said Lynn.

"The young lady has returned to town," went on Mr. Mallory, with a quick look at Lynn's face, which the latter met unmoved.

"Indeed," he said.

"Yes. I met her the other day at her father's house. She is as—ah—ornamental as ever. She seems by no means inconsolable for the loss of—ah—Mr. Dulcimer. . . . . But to come back to the subject of your own career, Mr. Lynn. A few years hence, you may enter Parliament."

"That is not in the least likely. It is an ambition I have never set before me."

"Perhaps not. Because you cannot as yet have awakened to all the possibilities, and responsibilities, of your new position. And,

conceivably, you may never care to woo a constituency. There are, no doubt, even at present, a few men outside the House—men whom I may term Creative Publicists—who have refused to tie themselves to the wheels of Party, and whose decisions on the vital questions of the day carry quite as great weight as if they came from recognised Parliamentary leaders. Now, I could quite understand, Mr. Lynn, that if you were one day to occupy—as you very well may—a position of that kind, you might be reluctant to hazard your influence by taking part in the Parliamentary hurly-burly."

"You speak from experience, Mr. Mallory?"

"In part I do. I have felt, I will own it to you, that I could not afford at present to accept a seat in the House. Were I to do so, it might compromise me in the eyes of the People.—But your path may differ from mine, though we are conscious of the same motive, and keep the same goal in view. And if you ever did choose to enter the House, you would find it, I need scarcely

say, an inestimable advantage to be connected with such an organ as the *London* will doubtless become. Of course, while I am as I now am, it would matter less. But at any moment the man who has given his life to the People, in the way I have done, may succumb to the heat and burden of the day. And whatever might befall *me*, the paper would, of course, endure."

Mr. Mallory paused, as if expecting an answer. But for some time Lynn did not speak; he seemed immersed in thought.

"I see all the advantages of your offer," he said; "but you must not wonder if I hesitate. It is not as if you asked me merely to invest a certain sum of money at a certain rate of interest—"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Mallory; "I ask of you much more than that. To those other friends of mine of whom I spoke, I showed certain rows of figures; and they, on the strength of those figures, and of my reputation in the world of letters, have thrown their capital into the new enterprise. I myself

shall throw into it my money and my brains. I invite you to join in it on a precisely similar footing. I desire that you may become my partner, and my—ah—coadjutor."

"That is why I hesitate," said Lynn, "as I would not, if it were merely a question of money. The issue is, to me, all-important. My decision may very probably give its shape to my whole after-life.—Tell me, Mr. Mallory, do you think there is not an alternative between living in absolute idleness, and entering actively into politics?"

"In your case—none. You could not, of course, even if you tried, enjoy what is called 'pleasure' now-a-days by young men. On the other hand, my dear sir, you are too eager, too ardent—ah—you have too much red blood in your veins, ever to be mummified into the inutility known as a scholar."

"Surely that is heresy from you, Mr. Mallory!"

"How—heresy?"

"I thought you were a firm believer in Mill, you know?"

"I regard Mill as *the* light-bringer *par excellence* of this generation. I believe that Avignon will be lastingly associated in the minds of men with the Logic of Mill—not with the strumming of Petrarch. Really, I don't see the drift of your remark, Mr. Lynn."

"Was it not Mill who preached the Gospel of Leisure? And do you not think it possible for a man to turn his life to some account by devoting it to quiet study, without rushing into the 'hurly-burly' of practical politics, as you yourself called it a moment ago?"

"Not in the case of such a man as you. If you attempted it, you would speedily make the acquaintance of the Demon of Ennui which haunts great libraries. You *must* have excitement; that is obvious. Mr. Lynn, would you make of your intellect a rusty rake to disturb the dust-heaps of the Past, when you might use it as a shining sword in the battle-fields of the Present?"

"I am not vain enough to think that I have any such weapon at command."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Mallory, with a smile more flatteringly significant than words, "I know you better than you know yourself. What a career—what a future lies before a man with independent means and the dialectic gift, who, with youth on his side, devotes himself to the Cause of the People! His efforts after self-culture are freed from the taint of egoism. He knows that as his mind ripens, as his style takes a keener edge, he is making himself a more finely-tempered instrument for the redressing of Wrong. Even if the Fates should not 'heap up his moments with fame,' they will 'triple his pulses with life.'—And yet there are writers who, forsooth, would have us believe that it is a finer thing to flutter a girl's heart, than to thrill a mighty concourse of men! When I think of these imbecilities, I see more and more clearly the deep wisdom of Plato in excluding poets from his Republic."

"Would not that prohibition have shut out Plato himself?"

"It might. But I sympathise with him,

nevertheless. There is nothing, Mr. Lynn, nothing in the gamut of human folly, that saddens me so profoundly as the reading of what are termed 'love-poems'!"

"I should not have thought you would have taken such things so seriously, Mr. Mallory."

"I do take them seriously, and I will tell you why. But first of all, I hope you will not suspect me of cynicism—a thing which, above all others, I despise."

"Cynicism is better than hypocrisy, is it not?"

"It almost invariably *is* hypocrisy. I despise a cynic as I do a dogmatist. Your dogmatist is a man who says the same thing over and over again, because he has nothing to say in support of it. Your cynic is a man—in nine cases out of ten—who says he loves no one, because someone will not permit him to say that he loves *her*. Now, on what subject have more 'cynical' things been said than on any other?"

"On love and marriage, I should suppose."

"That is so. And, of course, when you hear any individual airing such flippancies as—ah—let us say, for example, this—'If love is the wine of life, marriage is the headache in the morning'—you know exactly what to expect. You know that on the earliest opportunity that individual will act as if the chief end of man were to prove himself only a little lower than the ring-doves.—You were surprised that I should take such things as those 'love-poems' seriously, Mr. Lynn?"

"I should like to know your reason," said Lynn.

"You shall have it," said Mr. Mallory. "Now, is it not the case that just as young men, when they have attained the age of unwisdom, think themselves poets and accordingly make themselves ridiculous—so, at the same stage, they believe the time has come for them to 'fall in love'—delude themselves into the notion that they have really done so—and think that they have thereby achieved something very fine indeed? That

is what happens; and in the case of average men it need do no great harm. But the sad —the infinitely deplorable thing which we owe to poets and story-tellers is this. They have be-rhymed and be-lectured many into the belief that this thing called 'love' is the one thing worth living for below 'the visiting moon'—that it is an exalting, intoxicating and imperishable joy, which *all* may know. To the average man this, of course, does no harm. But the men of the finest fibre, the men who are born to be the champions and benefactors of their fellows from their glowing sensitiveness—their ever-vibrating sympathy with all victims of Wrong —these men are thereby led to seek an outlet for their emotions in a direction which is almost infallibly ruinous.—I do not, remember, deny that there may have been and may be a few—a very few—individuals who have known this 'love' of which we read. But the thing is so rare, so exceptional, that to know it is little short of a miracle. And yet—thanks to poets and novelists and such

people—men are taught to believe that this divine joy is to be gained by whomsoever will keep his eyes open and his heart unchilled! The select few of whom I spoke, they also go in search of it—with the result that, after a course of idealising folly, they are jilted, or married; becoming, of course, in either case disillusioned and soured. Thus, we lose the very men whose passionate force would otherwise spend itself in promoting the emancipation of Humanity. It is a terrible price to pay for mellifluous mendacities!"

"Again you go beyond me, Mr. Mallory," said Lynn, as the Editor paused. "Your atmosphere is too rare for me to breathe it freely. Some time I may reach your heights—but, at present, I am still only ascending."

"You are yet young," said Mr. Mallory with a smile. "But one day I think you will come to see with me—and I can wish you no better wish than that. You must not suppose that I in any way contemn sentiment; on the contrary, I revere it. But the question is, in what channel shall your sentiment flow forth?

—in the runlet or the river? You must make your choice."

"Between the *vivre pour autrui* and the *égoïsme à deux?*"

"Unquestionably. I say to you, Mr. Lynn, that the men most richly dowered with noble emotion, if they give up to an individual what was meant for mankind, are certain—almost certain—to end in misery. A single vase cannot hold the water of a flowing fountain—that is all. In the case of a man such as you or myself, marriage would be a dereliction of duty. For one thing, marriage almost inevitably deadens a man's interest in the things of the spirit—in the great movements of the day. If the marriage is a happy one, he sinks into square-toed domesticity and tea-pot humdrum. And, of course, in the case of a man whose intellect is daily developing through study, marriage can scarcely ever be happy. You choose, say at twenty-two or twenty-five, the companion who suits you at that stage. Ten years afterwards your tastes have altered, they have matured; but your consort is

unchanged, save by corpulence. At one time a human being likes candy; at another, claret. The man who marries in his youth will be forced to content himself with molasses—not to say vinegar—when his educated palate craves for Lafitte."

Mr. Mallory paused, and glanced across the table at his guest. Lynn said nothing. He appeared, however, to be listening with close attention; and the Editor resumed:—

"And there is another thing which you, in your present position, ought to consider. For the married man, the pleasure of Society is robbed of its most delicate aroma. So long as you remain single, you will inhale a subtle fragrance of romance in every drawing-room. Every beautiful girl will be of interest to you, as you will be to her. In that you will find relaxation—innocent but piquant—from your serious labour. But once you are married—the air will be no longer stirred for you by the wings of invisible amorini. No—you will have lost the choicest bouquet of social intercourse. You will

stagnate, vegetate—what you will; anything, but *live.*"

"Then," said Lynn, "you do not counsel me against poetry, after all, if only it stop short of matrimony?"

"It is a fair retort," said Mr. Mallory with a smile. "Nevertheless, you must see clearly what I mean—and, as regards yourself, I trust your views may harmonise with my own. And now, Mr. Lynn, let us descend from sentiment to business—our conversation has wandered somewhat from the matters I intended to discuss with you."

Mr. Mallory's business talk lasted some time. It was devoted entirely to the subject of the *London;* and led up to a distinct, tangible offer made to Lynn of certain terms, on which he might become one of the proprietors, while joining the staff, of the new paper. It was too important a matter, the Editor said, to be settled off-hand. At the same time, his arrangements must be speedily completed; and he could not, in justice to others, leave the question open for a lengthened period.

He must request Lynn to bear that in mind, and to give him his final answer at the earliest possible moment.

"By the way," he said, as Lynn rose to go, "I proposed you for the Wayfarers', Mr. Lynn, as I promised to do before you left for the Continent. And at the ballot the other day you were duly admitted. You will find it an excellent club in every way, and you will meet a number of men there whom it is desirable that you should know. I hope to have the pleasure of introducing you to some of them. C—— and S—— and D——" (here Mr. Mallory named certain celebrities in the literary and political worlds) "are members of the Wayfarers'."

Lynn thanked Mr. Mallory for his good offices; and took his leave, after making an appointment to dine with the Editor at the club on an early day.

This interview gave Lynn sufficient food for thought. He had enjoyed Mr. Mallory's conversation greatly, but it had been with a purely intellectual enjoyment. Nothing could

have been more complimentary than Mr. Mallory's way of playing the Mentor—his one-man-of-the-world-to-another manner—his assumption that they two, kindred spirits, stood alone upon a height above the mass of men. But Lynn's eyes had been opened. He saw through the flattery, to which, in his former days of happy credulousness, he might have fallen a victim. Mr. Mallory had sought to play upon his vanity. It had been a singularly clever performance ; but it had failed.

The proposal with regard to the new paper, however, was a matter quite distinct from all that talk about Humanity, love, marriage, the conduct of life, and such things. It was a definite offer, which he might either accept or refuse.

Lynn had no doubt as to the financial success of the new paper. And he himself had abundance, super-abundance of money. There seemed every prospect of his being clear of the Lone Peak in a very short time, without the loss of a shilling. And according to advices from Mr. Malcolm, his partner in

Queensland, the property there had risen, from accidental causes, to nearly double its former value within the last six months. It was not therefore for any reason connected with money that he hesitated as to saying Yes to Mr. Mallory.

But he recognised the fact that if he joined himself with the Editor of the *London*, he would have to break definitely with his own past. There was no reason why he should give his money to this new venture, unless he gave himself with it. Making all allowance for Mr. Mallory's desire to be agreeable, Lynn was quite aware that his power as a writer had its value in the Editor's estimation—a value much less considerable, indeed, than his money, but still worth taking into account. He did think, without vanity, that he could make himself felt in the working of the *London*. And Mr. Mallory had certainly touched the chord of ambition within him. What he might yet aim at was uncertain; but, undeniably, to have an influential journal at one's back is a great thing.

Nevertheless, Lynn did hesitate. And the reason of his hesitation, as he found on analysing his own feelings, was simply the fact that if he cast in his lot with Mr. Mallory, his estrangement from his kinsfolk at Shawkirk would thenceforth be final. He knew his uncle too well to think otherwise; what Mr. Ingleby had said, he would certainly do. But was this a sufficient reason for throwing away such a chance as that now offered him?—the very chance that he had desired to find—that of striking out a line for himself, in which his wealth would play only a secondary part? Reflecting on the matter, Lynn did not think that it was a sufficient reason. Nevertheless, he hesitated still. His thoughts ran a good deal, in those days, on Mr. Mallory's philosophy of life. There had been truth in the Editor's words, no doubt. His love for Camilla Arden—that, indeed, might have been such a passion as Mr. Mallory had described—an idealising of folly—a thing that would not have been helpful to him in his life, but the reverse. Even granting that, however, he did

not feel at all disposed to station himself on a height with Mr. Mallory, and thence look down on love as an illusion that promises everything, and has nothing to give. He knew better than that. He knew that if—and his thoughts went back to Shawkirk; and still he put off the day of his decision.

On the evening appointed, he dined at the Wayfarers' with Mr. Mallory. Two or three celebrities were of the party; and the *London* was not so much as mentioned.

In the club smoking-room, after dinner, a gentleman came forward and accosted Mr. Mallory. Lynn heard this gentleman, who spoke in a voice by no means subdued, ask to be introduced to him. He fancied that a shade of annoyance crossed the Editor's brow, as if he did not quite like having to go through this ceremony. The gentleman was, however, presented to Lynn by Mr. Mallory—as Mr. Bonnamy Fowler, M.P.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PRODIGAL.

In all the speculations regarding his relatives in which Lynn had indulged since his departure from Shawkirk, he had pictured them to himself as living on in the dull routine which he knew so well—continuing to do and say just the same things he had left them doing and saying. He did not as yet know of a certain great Event, which had broken the monotony of the family existence.

This was nothing less than Caroline's engagement. Mr. Carstairs had prospered in his wooing; had obtained Mr. Ingleby's approval; and pushed on matters with such ardour, that now the wedding-day was fixed.

The prospect of a marriage worked an immediate change in the domestic economy

of the Inglebys. Mr. Ingleby's womankind promptly took the upper hand, and shook off the discipline which he had imposed upon them. They never consulted him; only asked him for cheques. They made the house such that he wandered through it like a Rip Van Winkle awakened. The funereal parlour was littered with snippets of cloth and ends of thread, with articles of feminine attire, and gauds and gewgaws such as Mr. Ingleby had never beheld before. There was a ceaseless influx of parcels in brown paper, which were opened amid ejaculations of delight. Mrs. Ingleby and her daughters appeared to be constantly engaged in the purchase of inutilities or superfluities; in anxious deliberation over the veriest trifles. The matching of colours, the adjustment of tags and bows, the regulating of frillings and fringes, seemed to fill up their minds to the exclusion of all serious thought.

All this made Mr. Ingleby feel ill at ease. He could not regard it as a fitting preparation for holy wedlock. And yet, he could

not assert himself; for once, in his own household, he felt himself tacitly ignored. The marriage itself he was prepared to view with satisfaction, tempered by regret at the loss of the bright little girl, who had fluttered round him like a butterfly round a boulder of granite. But he wished to imbue his family with a sense of the responsibilities of marriage—and they seemed to care for naught but the philosophy of clothes.

Mrs. Ingleby spent her days between millinery and tears. Gertrude was sincerely glad; showing not a sign of irritation at a position of affairs which has been known to sour the sweetest sisterly affection. Caroline strove vainly to assume the grave dignity befitting a bride of twenty. Never before had she so fully realised the depth and complexity of the Dress Problem; and the working out of this, together with the visits of her betrothed, almost filled up the measure of her happiness. Almost—for even in those halcyon days, Caroline had her vexations.

One of these was the conduct of Dick,

which had latterly undergone an inexplicable change. He had become taciturn and morose. For the first time in his life, he seemed to find no anodyne in the wine-cup. He appeared quite to have altered his habits. He never went out of nights now, but spent the evenings with the family in the parlour, where he sat silent, moody, and unsympathetic. When Caroline expressed her opinion of this unnatural gloom — which she did frequently and with acid frankness—Dick never retorted in his customary vein. He contented himself with dropping dark hints to the effect that "they might all laugh in the meantime; they little knew what was in store for them"—that "sometimes things didn't come off as people expected"—and sundry mutterings of the like ominous kind.

"It is too bad of Dick," said Caroline. "The idea of him going about like a—like an undertaker just before his sister's marriage! The last time Edward was here, I declare he was barely civil to him. I think, mamma, it really is too bad!

"The poor boy is ill," said Mrs. Ingleby. "He has been working beyond his strength, and needs a holiday. Of course I know, my dear, that we should all be happy at your marrying—and marrying so well, too!—I'm sure I cried half last night to think of your leaving us—but nobody, you know, can help feeling ill. You *must* have noticed how pale Dick is! He has lost his appetite. He is just pining away."

And that Dick had lost his complexion and his appetite was a fact patent to all. Gertrude had some idea of what those symptoms might mean. She questioned him on the subject, but without avail. Dick stated that he wished he were dead; but beyond that would impart to her no definite information.

Caroline's other anxiety was more grievous to her than even Dick's unbrotherly behaviour. She had set her heart on having Lynn present at her marriage. It was not only that she had a genuine affection for her cousin; she felt that if he were not there the ceremony would be shorn of half of its splendour. And

such had been the words and looks of Mr. Ingleby, on the rare occasions when Lynn's name had been mentioned in that household of late, that Caroline feared there was scant likelihood of his receiving an invitation.

"I think it's a shame, mamma," she said. "I won't feel like being properly married, if Arthur isn't there. The things papa says are perfectly horrid. Why, what harm has Arthur done?"

"I'm sure I don't know, my dear," said Mrs. Ingleby; "I never *did* understand what it was all about, nor why Arthur went away from us in such a hurry. But you had better speak to your father yourself. Perhaps he will listen to you, now."

Caroline accordingly did speak, when they were within about a fortnight of the all-important day, and still Mr. Ingleby had made no sign.

"Oh, papa," she said, as the family were gathered at the supper-table, "don't you think it is time we let Arthur know what

is going to happen? He may have arrangements to make before he can get away from London."

Caroline had decided on this as her best opening move—to assume her cousin's coming as a matter of course. That failing, the air of pensive resignation might be tried.

"I do not intend to write to your cousin," answered Mr. Ingleby, "regarding your approaching union with Mr. Carstairs. Nor do I suppose that such intelligence would interest him, in the sphere which he has chosen for his own."

"Oh, how can you say that?" cried Mrs. Ingleby—"when Arthur has always taken the greatest interest in the girls! And I'm sure that he will be more than pleased to have Mr. Carstairs for a—for a cousin-in-law. I suppose that would be the relationship?—And you know he said that Mr.—well, Edward, I mean, but it seems all so strange yet!—that Edward was a—what was it, Carry?—Oh, yes! A 'capital fellow'—that was it."

"Your cousin, Caroline," said Mr. Ingleby,

"has, of his own free will, severed himself from those who should have been dearest to him, to join himself with men who earn their daily bread by sapping the foundations of religion and morality."

"Father!" protested Gertrude—"is not that a little too strong?"

"It is not," said Mr. Ingleby. "I do not speak without warrant. I have been reading the book of the man Mallory—the book which is called *Martyred Humanity*. Its contents have filled me with horror. They exceed anything I could have believed possible, even in these days of pernicious doctrine and rampant heresy."

"Oh, papa, have you really read it?" cried Caroline. "What is it like? I do so wish you would let me see it!"

"I shall certainly do nothing of the kind," said Mr. Ingleby; "it is not a volume, so far as I understand these things, to be placed in the hands of Youth."—Mr. Ingleby, indeed, had the 'volume' locked carefully away in his desk.—"When you ask me, Caroline, to in-

vite your cousin to your marriage, I cannot forget that he is at this moment allied with a man to whom Marriage itself is—not a solemn ordinance, an awful obligation girt round with sacred sanctions—but a mere social contract, a civil institution. I cannot forget that your cousin, at this moment, may possibly be speaking or writing, as a scoffer, against Christian Wedlock."

Mrs. Ingleby and Caroline would fain have pled further; but the lurid picture called up before them by these words reduced them to inarticulate sorrow. But help came from an unexpected quarter.

"What!" cried Dick, rousing himself from his now habitual silence, and speaking in a tone of genuine alarm—"not have Arthur at his cousin's marriage? Oh, you can't mean it! You *must* ask him—you *must*, I say! Why, you'll make people think he has quarrelled with us! It would be a downright shame, not to ask him—a shame and a sin! That's what it would be."

"Sir!" exclaimed Mr. Ingleby in high wrath

—but before he could go further, Caroline had interposed.

"Well, I must say, though I *don't* think Dick has been behaving of late to me—and to Edward—as a brother should—still, I must say I think he has spoken both nicely and sensibly just now."

"Caroline!" cried Mr. Ingleby; but Caroline was not to be repressed.

"I suppose, papa, that a girl who is about to make a marriage which is approved of by her family should have *some* say as to the people who are to be asked to the ceremony. It will be unkind of you, papa—it won't be like you one bit—if you don't let me have Arthur down!"—Then, passing suddenly from the reproachful to the appealing—"Oh, papa, think of this! This will be the last thing I shall ask you to do for me before I go away! Surely you won't refuse me, when I am going away so soon, and you won't have your little girl to tease you any more! Don't be unkind *now*, papa! Do ask Arthur to come!"

The tears came into Caroline's eyes as she

spoke, and Mrs. Ingleby wept aloud. Gertrude watched in manifest anxiety her father's face; and Dick continued to utter ejaculations of excited protest.

"Caroline," said Mr. Ingleby at last—and his face was paler than its wont, and his voice less firm—"Caroline, my little girl—my dear little girl—I would do much to make you happy, even at a sacrifice to myself, now when you are leaving me, and all of us—forsaking father and mother, to take up the duties of a new estate. You know that, Caroline?"

"Yes, papa," sobbed Caroline.

"I trust, my dear, that you have chosen wisely—as I own I think you have—and I have prayed nightly that the new life on which you are about to enter may be one of happiness. But this thing I cannot do. If it were a question of seeming to humble myself in your cousin's eyes—if it were that alone—I would do even as you wish. But I cannot take into my house and home one who has deliberately set himself to do the work of those who are doing the work of the

Adversary. It would lie heavy on my soul were I to have one who has leagued himself with the Infidel associating with my daughters —and—and with my son."

Here Dick gave vent to an audible groan.

"Do not misunderstand me," continued Mr. Ingleby. "I have still a hope that if I abide by my decision, and hold no converse with Arthur Lynn, he may yet turn away from the false teachers—those wells without water, those wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Even yet, I say, his heart may yearn for his kindred—for that he has a kind heart I know."

"He has," interjected Dick; "there's no doubt about that!"

"But until that comes to pass, there can be no welcome for him here. He has chosen his path, and it shall not cross with yours. So long as he continues where and what he is, he shall be—I say it with sorrow, aye, bitter sorrow, but none the less am I resolved—he shall be to me and mine as a heathen man and a publican!"

This finale put an end to protests and supplications. The evening had been robbed of its cheerfulness for all. But amid the general depression, no observer could have failed to note the despairing, the agonised woe betrayed by the countenance of Dick. His manner in taking leave of his mother and sisters for the night was something more than peculiar.

"Good-night," he said in sepulchral tones; "good-night, all of you. Don't say I haven't done my best. Whatever happens, don't say *I*'m to blame. Good-night, Carry; I'm sure I hope you'll be happy—but you'll all be sorry Arthur wasn't asked; you will, mark my words. Good-night again, mother—good-night, Gerty. Yes, the governor'll be sorry yet for what he's done to-night. You'll see."

"Poor dear boy!" said Mrs. Ingleby. "How fond he is of his cousin! Well, well—I suppose your father must be right. But it is *such* a disappointment!"

Next morning, the mysterious significance

of Dick's good-night was explained. He did not come down to prayers; and, on search being made, it was discovered that he had not passed the night under his father's roof. Further inquiries elicited the fact that he had been seen in the refreshment-room of the railway station, equipped for travelling. All was uncertain, save the fact that Dick had fled the town; and dire was the consternation which reigned in the Ingleby household.

On the evening of the day after Dick's flight from Shawkirk, Arthur Lynn spent some time at the Wayfarers' Club, of which he was now a *habitué*. Club-life was new to him, and he entered into it with some zest. What a contrast it was to the old life at Shawkirk! How far away it all seemed from Mr. Ingleby's dingy parlour, where the shadow of impending homily seemed ever to brood! At that hour Mr. Ingleby would be summoning his household to prayer. How irksome the nights in Shawkirk had been!—and yet, had he found them so in the time before his first journey to

the Continent? Lynn confessed to himself that he had not. He knew what had given life, even Shawkirk life, its charm in those days; he knew what had robbed it of that charm since. Again the feeling of dissatisfaction with his present—the vague sense of incompleteness and insufficiency—came over him. It made him feel uncomfortable. Why could he not let himself go with the current, and take the world lightly, like other men?

As he stood musing, a loud voice broke upon his reverie—the voice of Mr. Bonnamy Fowler, M.P.

"Seen Mallory to-day, Mr. Lynn?" boomed the financier. "No? Thought I might find him here—Wednesday night, you know—no sitting to-night. Mallory's friend The O'Mourdoch talked out the bill. Bad lot, The O'Mourdoch—ever met him? I say"—and here Mr. Fowler's voice sank to muffled thunder—"I am glad to hear we are going in together. Very glad indeed. I have no fear myself—none whatever."

"'We?'" said Lynn. "Who are 'we,' Mr. Fowler?"

"Why, you and Arden and myself, to begin with. Hope it will turn out as well as your last operation, Mr. Lynn. Splendid *coup* that, and no mistake! You and Arden worked it well between you. Met him lately?"

"No," said Lynn; "indeed, not since the *coup*."

"This will be different from opening in a lively stock, of course," continued Mr. Fowler. "But it's a sure thing, I take it. No 'unloading' needed in this, eh?"

"In the *London?*—that is what you mean, I suppose?"

"Of course it is."

"I did not know until now that Mr. Arden had any concern in the new paper."

"No? Thought you would. (Suspect I've spoken too soon," reflected Mr. Fowler; and he determined to say no more to Lynn on the floating of the *London*.) "I did hear something about his being in the syndicate, but you must know as much about the whole

thing at this stage as I do—very likely more. —Want me to take a hand, some men here do. See you again to-night, perhaps."

"One moment, Mr. Fowler—you seem to be under a false impression about me. I am, as yet, in no way bound with regard to this new paper of Mr. Mallory's. He has talked the matter over with me, but that is all. And as to the *coup* you spoke of, Mr. Arden deserves all the credit of that. I should be most unwilling to rob him of it."

"Most proper, I'm sure"—murmured Mr. Fowler.

"Unfortunately, I could not explain the matter without exposing an ignorance of—well, of business, that would seem to you incredible. But I may inform you that I am no longer a partner in the Lone Peak company. My brokers had instructions to sell out whenever the stock touched par. And they did so yesterday."

Mr. Fowler betook him to his rubber in the belief that he had somehow 'put his foot in it.' His opinion of Lynn was gone; but Mr.

Arden stood even higher in his estimation than before.

Lynn walked back to his rooms in Jermyn Street, vexed and ill at ease. He was annoyed at the thought of the Lone Peak transaction being represented as it plainly had been to Mr. Fowler, and, no doubt, to others. He was angry with Mr. Mallory for having concealed from him, thus far, the fact of Mr. Arden's pecuniary connection with the new paper. He could not look on this as a chance omission. He had no doubt that Mr. Fowler's first statement was true.

Till now, Lynn had been halting between two opinions with regard to Mr. Mallory's proposal. The temptations to agree to it were strong; the advantages it offered were obvious. To reject these, for the reasons that had hitherto swayed his mind, would be like casting away the substance for the shadow. Still, he had felt a certain disinclination to bind himself to Mr. Mallory; and had from day to day postponed taking the step from which he could not go back. He felt glad

now that he had done so. The discovery he had made through Mr. Fowler decided him. It furnished him with a reason, quite satisfactory to himself, for having nothing to do with Mr. Mallory's project. He had long ago made up his mind that at no price should he again become involved in any way with Mr. Arden. He would certainly stand by that resolve.

Another, and not less disagreeable, surprise was in store for him, when he entered his sitting-room. There, at the table, sat Dick Ingleby, with white face and blood-shot eyes —looking the wreck of his former self. His checked Tweed suit, his massive double watch-chain, his crimson neck-tie and far-flashing breast-pin, gave, as it were, an ironic setting to his misery. He looked the picture of grief, but of grief in a *bouffon* masquerade. The first thought that flashed through Lynn's mind, as he gazed at his relative, was that he had witnessed the same scene in a farce. Dick's look and attitude were such that he might have stood for a low comedian's study

of woe. But this impression passed in a moment; and a great fear seized upon Lynn of what his cousin's coming might forebode.

"Good God!" he cried; "what's the matter with you? What brings you here?—There's nothing wrong with Gertrude?—with any of them at Shawkirk?"

"Everything's wrong at Shawkirk," moaned Dick; and he sank his head and made a helpless movement with his hands—"at least, everything will be, soon. It's all up, Arthur. Oh, this is awful!—awful!"

"What is awful?—Is anyone ill, or—what is wrong? Can't you speak, man? Why have you come here?"

"Nobody's ill at Shawkirk. It's worse than that, by a long chalk. I'll tell you all about it—I came here just for that—but give a fellow some time to—to recover himself.—You see, Arthur, there's to be a marriage in our family."

"A marriage!" said Lynn, and he stood for some time silent. He was conscious of a sinking of the heart; a sensation almost of giddiness,

which made him see Dick for the moment as it were through a mist. "So," he thought, "that is over. Morton has carried his point." And in that instant Lynn knew that he loved his cousin Gertrude.

"Who is to be married?" he asked, almost mechanically.

"Caroline, of course," said Dick. "She's to be married to Carstairs, the lawyer.—At least, she was to have been, but all that's at an end now, of course."

"Caroline!" said Lynn; and in the gladness the news brought him his irritation at Dick's behaviour was very sensibly lessened. "Now then, Dick," he went on, "you say something dreadful has happened, about you and about your sister's marriage—and that it is to be and is not to be. Just come to the point, will you, and try to tell your story like a rational human being?"

"I wanted them to ask you to the marriage, Arthur—I tried to make them, I did indeed. But the governor wouldn't, for all I could say. It wasn't *my* fault, anyhow."

"I don't want to hear about that. You've got something to say, Dick, and you're afraid, or ashamed, to say it. You really don't need to beat about the bush with me."

"It was all Lord Primavere did it, Arthur! It was all through him!"

"What in Heaven's name do you mean?" —asked Lynn; and he began to think that his cousin's brain must be giving way.

"You see there's what they call 'forestalling,' you know. Well, Primavere was always dead against that, and he was 'forestalled' about Belle Poule, and couldn't get his price because the public money was on, and so, you see—"

"Oh, cut all that. You mean, in short, that you've been at your old work—gambling on the turf. That's what you've come to tell me, I suppose?"

"I wasn't gambling," said Dick piteously; "I haven't touched cards for I don't know how long—I haven't, I'll swear it! I was only following Primavere's horses—got the straight tip—but I lost a bit of money, you know.

Not what a fellow like you would call much" —and Dick glanced round the luxuriously-furnished room—" but a good bit for a fellow like me."

" What did you mean by talking about your sister's marriage? What have your betting losses to do with that?"

" I'm coming to that—only give a fellow time. But I want you to understand, Arthur, how I got into this mess. You see, it's this way; when an owner is 'forestalled'—"

" Have you been borrowing from Carstairs?"

" Not I," said Dick, with a touch of his old manner; " not likely. He's a different sort from you, Arthur. He can't sympathise with a fellow."

" No, I should think not. Now, look here, Dick. If you drop that ridiculous slang, and let me hear exactly how you are placed, I shall listen to you. If not, you can't take yourself off too soon. Understand that."

" Well, this is how it was. I lost a lot of money over Belle Poule to a blackguard Niven —and—"

"Well?"

"Well—it's not nice, you see, for a man to marry a girl whose brother can't pay his debts of honour. You can hardly expect him, you know."

"Oh, that's it? You think I did not mean what I said to you at Shawkirk, when I took up that bill of yours? You are trying to impose on me again, under cover of your sister's marriage?"

"No, no, Arthur—it's not that—it is not, I swear. I'm not lying this—I mean, I'm not lying to you now. There's nobody to help me if you won't; and if you don't, it will be all through the town—and, of course, Carstairs won't have Carry then."

"What will be all through the town? Understand this, Dick—if you don't make an end of all this shuffling and groaning, and speak out like a man, I shall not listen to you any longer. I'm sick of your wretched stories. I've heard them all before."

"It's not about betting this time, Arthur. If that were all!—but it's worse, far worse!

It will kill my mother if it comes out. Oh, it's awful—awful! I wish I were dead!"

"Once more, will you make a clean breast of it, or will you not? What have you been doing? And what do you want of me?"

"Want?" repeated Dick. "This is what I want, Arthur. I want to get away!"

"To get away?—where?"

"Anywhere," said Dick. "I don't mind, so long as it's far enough. Manitoba—New Zealand—the Cape—it's all one. Perhaps the Cape would be best—it's furthest, isn't it?—and I knew a fellow that was sent there by his governor. If you'll only pay my passage out, Arthur, and give me a trifle to start with, it's all I'll ask. And you'll never see me any more, you know."

"That is absurd, Dick. Tell me the whole truth—if you can—or else stop talking altogether."

"I will—yes, I'll tell you the truth—the whole truth!" said Dick, with a flaccid attempt at a manly bearing. "I will, so help me! And then, perhaps, you'll give me the

money to get clear away. As I told you, I owed money to that scoundrel Niven—"

"Who is he?"

"Niven?—He's a—a publican at Shawkirk. It wasn't much to begin with, but it ran up at last to about £200. At least, he said it did. But, of course, he has swindled me; I know that."

"How did you come to owe this man money? Betting, I suppose?"

"He put it on for me, with the bookmakers, you know. At least, so he said. And I always lost, and put on some more to clear myself. But it was no good—everything went against me. Oh, Arthur, if you knew what a life that man has led me! I didn't want to win anything—only to clear myself—that's the truth! He dunned me morning, noon, and night. He'd come up to the Works, and hang about till he saw me. Once he came to the office. At last he said he'd go to the governor, and demand payment from him. He put the screw on me most awful. Oh, you've no idea of it—none!"

"And what did you do?—for I see you've done something."

"He said if I'd give him a hundred and twenty, down, he'd give me back all my I. O. U.'s. What was I to do? He'd got my last quarter's allowance already, and wouldn't wait for the next one—besides, that wouldn't come to thirty pounds. He wouldn't hear of a bill—what he wanted was a cheque for the amount, or else the cash—one or other. Of course I had no cash, and so—and so—I—I got him the cheque."

"From your father?"

"Well, no. Not exactly. You see, Arthur, it was this way. Niven said he wouldn't present the cheque—only keep it, as a kind of guarantee the money would be paid. If I gave him the cheque, he'd give me time to pay up; that was the bargain. I believed him. I thought it was all done on the square, you know. I did it just to gain time."

"Did what? Signed the cheque yourself?"

"Well, no. Not that, exactly. I haven't

got a bank account, you know. I didn't put my own name to it—"

"Then you forged your father's name?"

"Oh, Arthur, don't call it that—for God's sake, don't! It wasn't forgery—not common forgery, I mean. The cheque was never to be presented—you know I told you that, Arthur!"

"Oh, you fool!" said Lynn; "you fool!—and worse than fool!"

Here Dick began to cry bitterly, and Lynn perceived the uselessness of such upbraidings.

"Finish your story," he said, after a pause. "Go on."

"After he got the cheque," continued Dick, still in tears, "the ruffian was worse to me than ever. He swore he wasn't going to lie out of his money any longer. He would go to the bank next day, unless I paid him up what I owed in full—in full, mind you—and a hundred pounds into the bargain!"

"For hush-money?"

"Of course he knew I didn't want it to come out. It would bring disgrace on us all, you know."

"And where did he think you were to get the money?"

"From my father, or—or from—from—"

"From me?"

"Well, everybody in Shawkirk knows how rich you are, Arthur. You can't wonder at that, can you?—That was why I wanted them to ask you to the marriage. I couldn't write to you about it, but I thought that if I saw you, and—and explained the thing, you would—"

"Did this man Niven know that you had forged your father's name?"

"Oh, he was too precious 'cute for that—he shammed not to, you know. He asked me once before another man how I got the cheque, and of course I had to say I got it from my father—I said it was in payment of my screw—my salary, I mean. And the impudent rascal said that a cheque with old Ingleby's name on it was as good as a bank-note, any day. He knew how it was, all the time, just as well as I did. But you could never bring it home to him. He's too deep for that."

"Is that everything?" asked Lynn. "Are you keeping nothing back?"

"Nothing!" said Dick; "no, I've made a clean breast of it, I have!"—And he seemed actually to feel a glow of returning self-respect, as if dimly conscious that his wrong-doing had been in some way expiated by confession.—"I've told you all, Arthur. Nobody can say I've tried to hide my mistakes."

"And now, what do you want me to do?"

"To pay my passage out, Arthur! Only that—to pay my passage out! Do that, and I'll turn over a new leaf, see if I don't! I'll make a fresh start. Yes, I'll rough it like a man—I'll go to the backwoods—anywhere. I'm not afraid"—and Dick actually felt himself growing heroic as he spoke.

"And so," said Lynn, "if I were to 'pay your passage out'—whatever you mean by that—you would leave your family to face all the shame and misery you have brought upon them? You would have this man go to your father, and tell him what you have

done? Upon my word, Dick, nothing you have told me to-night makes me think so little of you as that does!"

"But what am I to do?" moaned Dick, again prostrated. "It's a case of going to prison, unless I get clear away in time. My father will never pay for me, I know *that*, and I shall be sent to jail! Much good it will do my people to have me sent to jail! It would kill them, and it would kill me. I couldn't stand it—you know I couldn't!"

And at this point Dick became incoherent and hysterical.

"Have your people any notion of where you are?" asked Lynn.

"Not unless they guess. I didn't tell them where I was going. In fact, I didn't tell them I was going at all."

Lynn sat for some time silent and in thought, furtively observed meanwhile by Dick. At last he spoke.

"I'm not going to lecture you," he said, "on what you have done. But I tell you frankly that your conduct has been so selfish

and so shameful, I would not lift a finger to help you, if the punishment of it was to fall only on you. You are a forger, and the place for a forger is a prison."

"Oh, Arthur, don't be so rough on a fellow! Don't call me that—for God's sake, don't!"

"This is what I mean to do. I shall telegraph to-night to your father that you are here."

Dick shuddered.

"And to-morrow I shall take you with me down to Shawkirk."

"What?—Go back to Shawkirk?—Never! I couldn't look my father in the face—I couldn't do it! I would rather kill myself, than go back! Yes, I would!"

"Do you think I am going to help you to skulk away like a coward from the consequences of your crime? I say you shall go back to your father, and confess what you have done, or, at least, authorise me to do that for you."

"Never!" cried Dick; "never! Oh, why are you so hard? Oh, I wish I were dead!"

"That's what you must do, Dick. It's your only chance. Your father has been kept in ignorance about you far too long—there must be an end of that now. I can see that there's no hope for you, so long as you're allowed to escape the penalties of your own folly and wickedness. You will simply end as a tout or a billiard-marker, if not a jail-bird, if you are let off now."

Again Dick wept copiously. "I'd much rather go away," he said—"anywhere, out of the country. Oh, won't you pay my passage out? It's the last thing you'll ever have to do for me!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind. After you have gone down with me to Shawkirk, and done all you can to get your father's forgiveness, I may be able to assist you, but not till then. That's final, Dick."

"He'll never forgive me. He'll say terrible things, I know he will!"

"I should think he will, but, all the same, you'll have to go. Otherwise, I simply wash my hands of you and your affairs."

"But will you see that blackguard Niven? Will you buy the scoundrel off?"

"Yes."

"And will you tell the governor about it, and soften him down all you can?"

"Yes, if you have not the manliness to do it yourself. Now, Dick, is that settled? Or are you going to take yourself off?"

"I can't do that," whined Dick; "where am I to go to? I haven't got a shilling in the world!—All right, Arthur!"—with a fresh assumption of the heroic—"I'll do it! You may wire to-night, and I'll go down with you to-morrow. There's my hand on it!"

Lynn took his cousin's hand, not without a qualm; and so the matter was arranged.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MEDIATION.

Mr. Ingleby's first proceeding, after learning of his son's flight, was to go up to his office, and make a careful scrutiny of the books and cash which had been under Dick's charge. He found no trace of any defalcation, and this was a relief to him, so far. Then he took his cashier, a shrewd and trustworthy man, into his confidence; and commissioned him to make private inquiry after the fugitive in the town. But no clue to Dick's movements was found; nothing beyond the fact that he had certainly left Shawkirk. The cashier, however, in making this report to his employer, conveyed to him a much clearer notion than he had had before of his son's mode of life, and the kind of company

he had been keeping. Mr. Ingleby's feeling in regard to Dick became one of indignation, rather than of alarm. He began to think it not unlikely that Dick had gone off on some mission in the cause of Vice. He would not, at all events yet awhile, raise the hue and cry after the runaway. He would wait, and see what the day might bring forth. Mr. Ingleby accordingly waited; but the day brought forth nothing.

This was by far the saddest time the Inglebys had ever known. The house had become a house of mourning. All that Gertrude could devise to assuage her mother's almost frantic grief she had done, but with little avail. In the intervals of her paroxysms of weeping and wailing, Mrs. Ingleby gave herself up to visions of the ghastly-grotesque, which were worse than the paroxysms themselves. She beheld Dick's corpse under every imaginable circumstance of horror. Now he had been cut to pieces by an express train; now done to death, in a wood, by gypsies; now he lay, stark and stiff, at the bottom of a coal-pit;

and now, drowned in the Fala, was being drifted inanimate to the sea. To this last idea Mrs. Ingleby recurred most persistently. The Fala was then in flood; and she vehemently besought her husband to go forth on the instant, and have the river dragged. Mr. Ingleby did not stir; and this proof of callous indifference to the lost one's fate drove Mrs. Ingleby into hysterics. Caroline meanwhile was wrapt up in the sense of her personal wrongs. That such a thing should happen within a fortnight of one's wedding-day—that one's happiness, when so near, should be imperilled by one's own brother—for that Dick had done something dreadful she was sure—was hard, very hard to bear. It was all very well for Gertrude to be composed and collected; Gertrude was not in her, Caroline's, position, and could not know what her feelings were. Mr. Ingleby, for his part, made no lamentation. He took up his cross—not, indeed, meekly, but with a grim patience, a kind of half-stoical resignation. Only when Caroline exclaimed against her cruel, cruel

lot, did Mr. Ingleby give utterance to words of grave and almost stern admonition. If, he said, it should be found that Richard had fled on account of some dishonourable act—and he did not conceal from them that there was reason for the supposition—then it should be his Duty to lay a statement of the case before Mr. Carstairs. Whatever the consequences, that must certainly be done; and it was as well that Caroline should know it now. Whereon Caroline departed in tears, and shut herself up in her own room.

When Lynn's telegram arrived next morning, it relieved Mrs. Ingleby's mind, but her's alone, of all anxiety. Such confidence had she in her nephew, that the mere fact of Dick's having gone to him seemed to prove conclusively that nothing could be wrong. "To think of our being in such anxiety," she said in her joy, "and my poor boy with Arthur all the time! To think that they will both be here this very night! Come, girls, let us go and make everything ready for them! Oh, I thought I should have *died* when I saw the

telegram, but now!—It's so like Arthur! How good he always has been to me! What a load he has taken from my mind!"

Lynn's message had merely stated that Dick had been with him in London, and that together they would reach Shawkirk that night. This did not reassure either Mr. Ingleby or his daughters. They were quite aware that some motive more powerful than cousinly affection must have prompted Dick to visit the metropolis. They dreaded to think what that might be.

"When your cousin arrives, Gertrude," said Mr. Ingleby to his elder daughter, "let him be shown up to my room. I shall await his coming there. He must see and speak with me, before meeting any of you."

"Won't that seem very cold to Arthur, father?" said Gertrude.

"Let it be as I say," rejoined Mr. Ingleby; and so it was. When Lynn reached the house, somewhat late that evening, he missed the joyous greeting to which he had been accustomed—and to which, perhaps, he had

looked forward. He was taken to the small room upstairs, used by Mr. Ingleby when he desired his own companionship, or had brought home 'work' with him from the office. There Lynn found his uncle, who rose as he entered, but spoke no word of welcome.

"You are alone?" he said.

"Yes. But he came with me to Shawkirk. I left him at the hotel."

Mr. Ingleby seated himself at the table, and signed to his nephew to take a place opposite him.

"What has he done?" he said; and his face wore a look of deeper care than it had worn since the discovery of Dick's flight. "I know that you have come as the bearer of no good news of him."

Lynn took the forged cheque from his pocket, and laid it before his uncle on the table.

"That is his writing," he said, pointing to the signature. "He admits it."

Mr. Ingleby lifted the cheque, and held it for some moments to the light, as though he

could not read it distinctly. Then he laid it down, without a word or a groan; but his nephew knew well what must be the struggle within. For a little he rested his head on his hands, and Lynn believed he was praying for strength to bear the blow. At last he raised his face, and said in a voice hoarse but unshaken—

"Tell me how you came into possession of this."

Lynn told as briefly as might be of Dick's arrival in London, and confession of his crime. He made no attempt to extenuate the act. To have done so then would, he felt, have been no better than a mocking of his uncle's anguish.

"As soon as we came to Shawkirk," he said, in ending his story, "and after I had seen him safe in the hotel, I went to this scoundrel Niven. He was at first fawning, then insolent. However, I gained my end, and you may rest assured that, for his own interests, he will keep silent."

"You have given this man a bribe?" said

Mr. Ingleby, who during the telling of Lynn's story had not uttered a word.

"I have. I know you will say that I should not have done so. The idea of purchasing his silence will seem to you like bargaining with sin. But I think you will by-and-bye see that it was the only way. We must think of others—of your wife and your daughters. To have defied this man would have been to make them pay the penalty of others' wickedness."

"You have judged me rightly," answered Mr. Ingleby. "I should not have treated with that man, not though the streets of this town had rung with the shame that has fallen on me—not though the writer of *that* had been dragged from a court of justice to a felon's cell. Hand nor finger should I have raised—no, not as God shall judge me. And even yet, I do not know that I should not do well to take it back to the wretch you bought it of, and bid him do his worst."

"Uncle, can you bear to listen to me a little longer? I shall not speak more lightly

of what your son has done than you would yourself. But we have now to consider what is best to be done for each and all of us. One thing is plain. For every one's sake, Dick must leave this place without delay."

Lynn paused, but Mr. Ingleby said nothing. He sat with white, tightly-compressed lips and hard eyes, gazing fixedly at his nephew. Since he had read the forged cheque, his face had been as a mask of stone.

"For the sake of your wife and daughters," went on Lynn, "Dick must be sent away from Shawkirk at once. He dared not himself face your anger, but this is *his* confession I am making to you—for him, I ask your forgiveness."

Still Mr. Ingleby did not speak.

"I have been thinking the matter over," Lynn resumed, "and I have a suggestion to make, which I hope you will agree to."

"He shall never enter this house again," said Mr. Ingleby; "he shall speak with none of its inmates. Further than that, I have nothing to say of him. Whether he stays

here or goes, it is the same. If you choose to speak of him, I shall listen this night—but this night only. Now and hereafter, he is and must be to me as one who is dead."

"Do you remember," said Lynn, "the letter you gave me in London?—the letter which was written to me by the man to whom I owe all that I have?"

"I remember the letter," said Mr. Ingleby.

"In that letter Hume told how, when he was a young man in this town, he fell into temptation—and how his life would have been ruined, but for the mercy my father showed him. He told how from the same kindly hand he received the aid which enabled him to rise to wealth in a new country. That he was not a bad man—that he was an able, and a generous and grateful man—you and I know well. Had my father been unforgiving—had he even been just and nothing more than just—where should I have been to-day? I do not say that Hume ever sinned as your son has—nor that your son would prosper in a new country as Hume did. But unless he

has the chance given him, he will simply ruin himself, body and soul. If a day were to come when you heard of him standing as a felon in the dock, could you free yourself from blame if you had refused now to hold out a helping hand to him?"

"What he has done," said Mr. Ingleby, "cannot be undone; neither can it be glossed over with empty words. My forgiveness!—what would that be to him? An idle speech—a warrant to him to sin again, and heap disgrace on my grey hairs!"

"He seems really humbled. I trust—I believe that he is penitent."

"Penitent! Do not name the word to me. I cannot pardon him in my heart. He has darkened what of this brief life is yet left to me. He has clothed me with dishonour; he has covered my face with shame. Shall I ever again hold up my head among men? Shall I ever take in public affairs the part that I have taken? He that knows not how to rule in his own house, shall he presume to rule without it? His deeds have brought me

down to the dust, and shall I forgive him because of his words?

"He is your son."

"He that begetteth a fool, doth it to his sorrow. That is the truth, and you cannot change it. With any plans you may have formed, I cannot interfere. But do for him what you will, he will turn against you, as he has turned against me."

"I want you to agree to this. Let him go out at once to Queensland. I will give him a letter to Mr. Malcolm, Hume's old partner—he is my partner now. Malcolm is one of the best men in the colony. He will look after him. He will see that he is placed in a position removed as far as may be from temptation. I have spoken of this to him; he is willing, even eager, to go. And, uncle—his mother and sisters must never know what he has done—"

"Because he has sinned," said Mr. Ingleby, "you would have me sin also, and fill my mouth with lies?"

"Forgive me, uncle, but your laws of life

are too strict for such a world as this is. Even with myself, I think you may one day see that you have been somewhat over-severe."

"I have," said Mr. Ingleby; "and to-night you have heaped coals of fire on my head. I have not thanked you, Arthur, and I cannot thank you to-night as I should. But I see how you have thought for us all. I had feared, I own, that wealth had rendered you worldly and vain and cold of heart. But I have erred—I have grievously erred. Yes, Gertrude was right in what she ever said of you. She was right, and I was wrong."

"What has Gertrude always said of me?"

"That you were one of those who ought to be rich, and not poor. That the possession of great wealth would bring out all the goodness of your nature. And therein I misjudged you. But even now, Arthur—when my teachings in my own family have borne the fruit you see—when you have come hither doing all that may be done for us—nay rather the more because of your kindness in this the hour of

our need—would I say to you, Abjure that man! Live where you will and as you will, but do not live in daily communion with that Arch-Infidel, and those who, under him, are doing the work of the Devil!"

"I have ceased to write for the *Forum*," said Lynn. "And I may tell you that I shall never write again in a paper edited by Mr. Mallory."

"Now God be thanked!" exclaimed Mr. Ingleby, with unaffected fervour. "What you have said rejoices my heart, even in the midst of this my affliction. I have been hard to you, Arthur—I should not have spoken to you and written to you as I did—but it was my fear for your soul's safety that made me hard. You will do me that justice, I know."

"The misunderstanding was all on your side, uncle. I never wronged you in my thoughts. I know that what you did was done out of a true desire for my welfare."

"It was," said Mr. Ingleby.

"And now there is but one thing more. The knowledge of this thing must be kept

from all save you and me. I shall—if you will allow me—tell my aunt and my cousins all they need ever know."

"May God in His goodness reward you, Arthur, for all you have done and still would do for me and mine! Had you not come, Heaven help me, I know not what evil I might not have wrought in my anger. I might—yes, I might have killed his poor mother. Tell her and my daughters what you think fitting. I shall say nothing; I leave the matter in your hands. More than that I cannot do.—Now, go to them. I could not make a feigned countenance before them to-night. There is a bitterness of the heart with which a man's nearest may not intermeddle. For me, I shall turn my face to the wall."

Lynn accordingly went down to the parlour, where his aunt and cousins had been counting the minutes till he came. He received a welcome in which joy, wonder and anxiety were all blended; then the questions began. Where was Dick?—At the Cross Keys Hotel. —Why had he not come to the house—to his

mother?—At this point Lynn felt the full difficulty of his undertaking. He had to spare his aunt's feelings, and yet make it clear to her that Dick must go. The first mention of Queensland filled Mrs. Ingleby with anguish and terror. Why must her darling boy go so far?—right to the other side of the world? What had he done to be thus banished from home and country? Lynn could not, of course, explain to her what Dick had done; and had to fall back on a liberal use of rose-colour. Only Mrs. Ingleby's almost touching confidence in him enabled Lynn to go through his task. The thing must be right, because Arthur had said it; and though she did not understand it, she would take it on trust. And Lynn's word-painting of colonial life was not without its effect; so that through the mist of her tears Mrs. Ingleby began to have glimmering visions of her son holding high sway over tattooed myriads; and returning to his native land—after a few years' absence—rich in honour and in gold. When, however, the time of Dick's departure came to be

mentioned, the storm of Mrs. Ingleby's grief broke out afresh. Had it been a year—six months hence, she might have borne it; but to-morrow!—it was too much to ask of her—it was cruel! Lynn compassionated the poor mother profoundly; he knew not what to say. He looked to Gertrude; who alone, all through the interview, had refrained from asking him any question, as if divining the difficulty of his task. He saw that she understood the look. Gently she drew her mother away.

"Gertrude," he whispered to her as she was leaving the room with Mrs. Ingleby, "try to make her understand that it *must* be. There is nothing else for it. It *must* be as I have said."

Lynn found himself left alone with Caroline, whose wonder and grief on her brother's account were swept quite away in the joy with which she learned that his misdemeanour —whatever it might be—was not to stand in the way of her marriage. To have a listener at that moment—and that listener her cousin, Arthur Lynn—was sufficient to complete Caro-

line's happiness. After hearing an infinity of details regarding "Edward"—his words and ways, his talents and his virtues—Lynn was called on to view and admire his cousin's wedding-gifts. Caroline kept to the last what she evidently regarded as the most precious.

"Aren't they lovely, Arthur?" she said, uncovering a toilet service beautifully filigreed in silver. "Where do you think that came from?"

"From India, I should say. It *is* beautiful. Why, it would do for the dressing-table of the Grand Mogul himself!"

"Would it? Well, who do you think sent it?—Your old friend Mr. Morton, all the way from Kurrachee. Wasn't it *nice* of him?"

"It was, Carry. How did he come to know of the Great Event?—Through you—or Gertrude, I suppose?"

"No, not from us. We have not written him since—I mean, not for a long time. It must have been from his friends in Shawkirk. I wanted to write and tell him, but I didn't like. And, of course, Gerty couldn't."

"Gertrude couldn't?—Carry, will you tell me this? I had the notion, when I was last down here, that Gertrude was being made unhappy about something. I could think of no reason for that, unless Morton had something to do with it. Was I right in thinking so, or was I wrong?"

"You were quite wrong, Arthur," said Caroline; "most certainly you were wrong."

"Was I? So much the better!—You see, I had fancied that your father might be making some objection—"

"Oh! You thought that!"

"And I tried to make Gertrude understand, the last time I saw her until to-night, that she might count on me to do anything I could—"

"You said that to her?—Oh, you shouldn't have said that! Indeed, you shouldn't!"

"So I begin to think. Tell me this, Carry—I am not asking it, believe me, for Gertrude's sake, nor for Morton's, but for my own. The answer is everything to me—don't you understand? Was there ever anything be-

tween Gertrude and Morton?—is there any thing now?"

Caroline lifted her head, and glanced at him. He thought there was a half-sly, half-pleased twinkle in her blue eyes.

"I think you are very inquisitive, Arthur," she said.

"I know I am very anxious, Carry."

"I believe you are. You *do* look it!"—archly. "Well, now, I'll tell you—but it is a great secret, you know. Do you remember that night at Sprayton, when you all went off, without me, to see a stupid old castle?"

"I shall forget many things before I forget that night."

"Yes?—I don't know if I should tell you, after all. I didn't find it out till ever so long after, and then Gerty made me promise never to breathe a word of it.—Still, I think I may to *you*, Arthur. Yes, I will—" and she whispered:—"that night Mr. Morton proposed to Gertrude."

"And she refused him?"

"Of course she did. You know there never

could be any *affinity* between them," said Caroline with dignity. "No doubt, Mr. Morton is very nice, and good-looking, and all that, but then, he is not a man of *intellect.* I know *I* would never marry anyone who was not *that*—and I do think you should have known Gertrude better than to suppose she would, either."

"Perhaps I should. I don't know much about his 'intellect,' but I know that Morton is a thoroughly good fellow—and I hope he will get a good girl to be his wife—the very best girl in the world, Carry, so long as it isn't Gertrude!"

"Do you? Why, you are quite excited about it, Arthur! Now, remember, you must *never* tell Gertrude what I have told you. She would never forgive me!"

"I shan't tell her to-night, at all events," said Lynn with a laugh. "Now, I am going upstairs to bid your father good-night, before I go."

"What! Are you not going to stay with us, Arthur?"

"I am going back to the hotel to-night,

and to-morrow Dick and I leave for Liverpool."

"But you will be here in time for my marriage?"

"Without fail, Carry."

"Oh, Arthur, I'm so happy!" said Caroline. "I know I oughtn't to be, but I can't help it. You must not think me selfish, Arthur—at least, I don't *mean* to be—and I *am* sorry for Dick, and for poor Mamma! But when I think how the marriage might have been put off—and how it is to go on now, and *you* are to be there—I *can't* be so sorry as I ought! Do you think it very wrong to feel so?"

"Of course, be happy," said Lynn, "and if you are sorry for Dick, don't show it. Remember, he will have a chance of making his way in the new country such as comes to very few young men. He has only to keep steady, in order to succeed. Try to make your mother see his going in that light. Speak of him brightly and hopefully. That is the best thing you can do for her, and for all."

Lynn went up to his uncle's room, knocked,

and entered. Mr. Ingleby was sitting as he had left him; but now there lay before him on the table an open Bible.

"I have told them," said Lynn. "They know that he is going, and they do not know why."

"How did she bear it?" said Mr. Ingleby.

"She is in great distress. And it will be worse with her to-morrow, when he goes."

"May God pity her!" said Mr. Ingleby. "Thus are the iniquities of the children visited upon the parents. It were better for her, aye, better, did she mourn as Rachel mourned in Ramah!"

"Do not say that, uncle. Do not harden your heart against him. Believe me, that cannot be right."

"I do not seek to do so, now," said Mr. Ingleby; and he laid his hand upon the open Bible. "Already this night I have said in my haste things that a father should not have said, however grievously his son had erred.—When you spoke to me of Hume, Arthur, I was reminded how I had sought to make *your*

father treat him, with justice, indeed, but not with mercy. And now, I see and acknowledge that therein, too, I was wrong.—But all this has shaken me, more, perhaps, than it should. The lights by which I had been used to walk seemed to have gone out, and left me in darkness. It may be that I have been over-strict in my ways. It may be that too much of carnal pride has mingled with my desire to keep my name untarnished among my fellow-men. When I spoke those bitter words about my unhappy son, I was, perchance, thinking more than I should have thought of the things seen and temporal.—It is a warning to me. I have been humbled in my own eyes. And it is well."

"Then," said Lynn, "will you not see him before he goes? Will you not let him, with his own lips, ask your pardon?"

"No," said Mr. Ingleby; "no. That is more than I can bring myself to do. Tell him, if you should speak with him of contrition and forgiveness, that well-doing is the kind of repentance which has weight with me."

"I shall tell him so."

"Nothing could be better," continued Mr. Ingleby, "than the plans you have formed for his future. Most cordially and most gratefully I accept your offer. I leave all to your discretion. There is but one condition on which I shall insist—that you give me an exact statement of all monies you may expend in connection with this matter. I am able to refund that portion, at least, of my debt to you."

"It shall be as you wish," said Lynn.

"He must bid his mother farewell," said Mr. Ingleby. "Let him come to the house to-morrow. I shall not be here."

"So be it," said Lynn. "We shall leave for Liverpool to-morrow, and I shall remain with him till the vessel sails. And now, uncle, good-night. For Caroline's sake, if for nothing else, I know you will strive to bear up against this sorrow. Who knows what good may not yet spring from it, after all?"

"Good-night, my dear Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby. "I cannot declare to you the grati-

tude I feel. To make any return for all you have done lies, as you know well, no longer within my power."

"You may have the chance of showing your confidence in me sooner than you think," said Lynn. "It is no time to speak of such things now—but I may yet have to ask you for what will make the happiness of all my life!"

Mr. Ingleby clasped his nephew's hand. He looked into Lynn's eyes, with a kind of wistful look; his lips moved, though no words came. And, albeit they parted without further speech, Lynn knew that his hint had not, at all events, added to his uncle's sorrows.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FACTORY OF THE PAST.

"No, Arthur, you can't make me believe you have not done us all a great service. While you were away, father let me know so much, at least—even if I had not guessed it myself before. And since he told me, I feel I have not been so sorry for poor Dick as I ought. It has made me so glad to think that my father has come to understand you, at last!"

"Really, Gertrude, you need not be sad on your brother's account. For my part, I have some hope of Dick, now."

"Have you, indeed, Arthur?"

"Yes. I believe now that your father did a wise thing in not seeing him before he left. Dick felt that more than I should have expected. He is bent on winning back his

father's good opinion. He is making his fresh start with far more than the usual chances of success. And he will be looked after—more closely than he has ever been before. Everything is in his favour, and I do think he will make his way."

"I hope so—how I hope so!—When you came back last night, I wanted to tell you how grateful I felt. But I could not say what I wished to say, before the others."

"There was nothing to be said. But I wanted to tell *you*, Gertrude, how happy I felt last night at being among you all again. It was so different from the evening we spent when I first came back from London. Do you remember?"

"Yes, I remember it very well."

"How was it you were all so different then from what you were last night? Last night I felt at home once more—as I had not felt for years. But when I saw you all again that other time, I seemed to be a stranger come among you.—And do you know, Gertrude, I thought you yourself were—well, cold, and

constrained to me? I thought you had changed. I began to fear we should never be on our old terms with one another again. Do you wonder that I should have thought so?"

"No—I can scarcely wonder at it."

"Then, why was it? What made you seem so—changed?"

"I suppose it was because you had become so rich—"

"Oh! That was the reason!"

"—And yet, I knew you would not be changed by riches. But I could not bear to have you think that we cared more for you, rich, than we had done for you while you were poor."

"That was pride, Gertrude!"

"I suppose it was. I know, at any rate, it was a very foolish feeling. But I could not help it. You see, the people here seem all so ready to worship money—and then, mother and Carry *would* talk of your coming as if you were a distinguished guest—and then, Arthur, you know you were changed yourself."

"I was. I had just awakened from a dream."

"I did feel for you, Arthur, though I could not tell you, as I should have liked to do."

It was the evening of the day before that fixed for Caroline's wedding. Arthur Lynn had returned on the previous night from Liverpool, after seeing the last of the exiled Dick. With Gertrude, he had made his escape, towards evening, from the tumult of preparation that filled Mr. Ingleby's house. They had walked as far as Lynnfield, and were now standing within the space encircled by its ruined walls.

"When I came back to you all that time," Lynn continued, "I had just made a discovery. I had just discovered that I had been making a fool of myself. I may tell you, Gertrude—for it is a thing you are never likely to learn from experience—that that is not a pleasant discovery to make. I had just found out that the people who, as I had been pleased and proud to think, cared for me for my own sake, had been treating me as a simpleton, and a tool."

"Oh, Arthur, surely you don't mean—

"No, I don't mean your father. Of course,

I think he was wrong in what he did—and I shall never forget that you pled with him, as he told me, to do the thing that was right. But I understand his motives, and respect them. And now, indeed, I ought to be very grateful to him for acting as he did."

"I don't understand?"

"You may, perhaps,—afterwards. But at the time, I did not feel grateful to him. Indeed, I felt very miserable, and very bitter. And then, you know, I thought how some of my good friends would expect me to behave in my new circumstances, and I determined to do the reverse of what they would look for."

"You could not deceive—those who really knew you!"

"It is kind of *you* to say that. Do you know what I thought, when I went to the *poste restante* at one town after another, and found no letter from you?"

"No. What did you think?"

"I thought you must be angry with me, because—because I did not claim that waltz you promised me!"

"Oh, how could you be so—so foolish!—I wonder," she went on, a little hurriedly, "what Caroline will think of Shawkirk, when she comes back from Paris? What a contrast it will seem!—Do you remember the arguments you had long ago with father, about our valley here and the Valdarno—and which was the better place to live in?"

"I remember I talked a great deal of nonsense in those days. I know now that one may travel without finding the road to happiness."

"I think if I had my choice I should rather visit Italy than any other country. Don't you wish any longer to see Florence—now that you can go where you please?"

"On the contrary—my fondest hope is to see it very soon."

"If you do, you won't send more letters to Mr. Mallory, will you?"

"No, certainly not. If I do go, my time will be very differently employed.—Do you know, Gertrude, I have been seeing a good deal of Mr. Mallory lately? I had a most

interesting conversation with him, not long before I came down here from London."

"What kind of man *is* Mr. Mallory? Is he really as bad as father makes him out to be?"

"Oh, scarcely!" said Lynn with a smile, as he thought of certain Biblical quotations. "He is amazingly clever, that is certain. He is by far the ablest man I ever met, or ever hope to meet. Do you know, he paid me a very high compliment—and meant it, so far? He has given up the *Forum*, you know, and is to start a new paper."

"Yes?"

"And he wished me to go into the undertaking. I was to give my brains, and, above all, my money. But the leading columns were to be opened to me—he promised that, among other things. It was, of course, an inducement."

"And you—?"

"Refused the offer—for reasons. Whether I shall regret doing so or not, remains to be proved. But in the meantime, I don't regret it."

"I am glad of that, Arthur. But you have not told me yet what kind of man Mr. Mallory is?"

"He is a cynic, in speech and practice. I fancy that all cynicism is affectation, more or less. But Mr. Mallory's is the most genuine affectation imaginable. He talked to me a great deal about 'doing good.' He does not believe in trying to do good to individuals —that is only a waste of emotion, and money. His principle is to do good on the largest possible scale to oneself, which, he says, must infallibly result in doing good on the largest possible scale to Humanity. What do you think of that as a principle, Gertrude?"

"I don't admire it."

They were standing now under the entrance of the Lynnfield Hall, from which point the view was shut in by the gaunt brick wall of the factory, with its rows of shattered windows. Not a sound save that of their own voices was heard. And now both were silent for a time, while they looked at the scene of ruin and decay around them.

"I should not like to come here with Mr. Mallory," said Lynn; "he would be much too epigrammatic.—Indeed, I should not care to come here with any one, Gertrude, unless it were with you."

"You used to say, Arthur, that none of the ruined castles you had seen abroad ever gave you so much to think about as this ruin, here, of your own?"

"That was true. But now I never come here without very mingled feelings. I can't but think how high and generous my father's aims were. I can't but remember that all I have is, in a sense, owing to his kindness to others. And then I feel that I should be untrue to his memory if I did not try in some way to carry out what was the main purpose of his life. You understand that feeling, I know."

"Oh, yes—so well!"

"But then—when I look at the ruin his schemes ended in—when I think of the ingratitude, the malice, the ridicule he earned—and that, too, from the very men for whom

he sacrificed his all—I find my heart hardening. My reason sides with Mr. Mallory. And then, it is so difficult, so seemingly impossible, to find the true way to work in! Why, the very word 'philanthropy' seems to bring irony with it as its shadow—so that at times I feel tempted to cease from troubling over it all—"

"You will never do that—never! When I first heard how you had become rich, I thought, 'now Arthur will be able to take up his father's work! Now he will be able to do good, as my uncle tried to do!'—I have thought so often about him! I have come here so often alone when—when you were away, and have thought how far he was above the other people here, and how sad the end of it was!—and I felt proud to think that now you would be able to carry out what he had given his life to in vain.—I don't mean in the way he tried—I don't understand about these things—but there must be many other ways! Are there not? And you will find one, Arthur, if you seek

for it!—or—or am I speaking foolishly?" and she stood silent and blushing at the excitement into which she had been betrayed.

"You are speaking as I would have a—cousin of mine to speak," said Lynn—and he marvelled more than ever how he could even for a day have deemed his cousin cold. "I don't need to tell you, Gertrude," he went on, "that I have gone through a good deal, since this money came to me, to make me doubtful about the things I used to believe in most firmly. Both here and—and elsewhere, I found out that your fortune or want of fortune makes a wonderful difference in other people's estimation of you. Of course, I knew all that before, theoretically. But it is another thing to learn it by experience. I don't know which is worse—to find that those who have been, as you thought, unselfishly kind, were mercenary all the while—or that those who were most selfishly unkind, before, are ready to take you to their heart of hearts, now. I have had my eyes opened, and my old illusions pretty thoroughly dispelled. But I

think—I do think I have been saved, thus far, from the other extreme. I know I have been very near that other extreme, often, during those months that have passed since the night when I left you so—so hurriedly. Two things, I think, kept me from it."

"What were they, Arthur?"

"One was the remarkably plain-spoken letter your father sent me. That letter refreshed me, more than I can tell you. Of course, I regretted that he should have put a stop to our correspondence. But the letter was like a tonic to me, at the time.—The other thing was that same conversation with Mr. Mallory, of which I have been telling you."

"How was that, Arthur? Did he not try to persuade you—"

"He tried to persuade me that darkness was light, and conversely. And I don't deny that his words influenced me, though not in the way that he intended. I might have struck a bargain with Mr. Mallory, but it would have been quite an everyday kind of

bargain—I had no thought of 'selling my soul,' as your father feared I had done or might do. But what he said brought many things into my mind.—I will tell you, Gertrude, what was almost the first thing I did, after leaving Mr. Mallory. I went to my rooms, took out from my desk that letter of Hume's, and read it again. You have heard about the letter, I daresay?"

"Yes. I have heard about it."

"It came to me, as you know, a message from the dead. I know nothing about Hume, except what that letter tells me, but it tells me enough. It seemed to me, as I read it that day, almost prophetic. It put everything in a quite different light from Mr. Mallory's."

"Tell me what he said to you?"

"He said very much what you have been saying to-night. He spoke of my father. He bade me copy his belief in the better side of human nature. He warned me against letting my riches make me selfish, careless of others, and content only to be rich."

"You did not need any such advice, I know!"

"I am not quite sure about that. At all events, that is the advice which I shall follow. You are right, Gertrude—there *are* ways, many ways, of using this money that has come to me for an end such as would have rejoiced my father's heart—and, with help—yes, with help—I think I shall find one of them. But first, I hope to make that long-talked of visit to the Valdarno.—And now that I have confessed to you, Gertrude—now let us see what Shawkirk is doing to the sunset."

They went into what had once been the outer court of the Lynnfield Works, whence they could see straight down the valley to the murky walls and many stalks of Shawkirk. It was not a beautiful view—in front, a bare valley gashed with a railway which crossed the winding stream on numerous iron viaducts; beyond, mean, dingy houses huddled together on either hill-side, with soot-begrimed church-spires rising above them; on the river-banks, the dirty-red, many-windowed piles,

whose tall chimneys blackened out the crimson of the West.

Gertrude, leaning on the broken wall with her head resting on her hand, looked down the valley, as Lynn thought, somewhat wistfully. And in truth, the girl's heart was full. Her brother, whom she had loved despite his faults, had gone away. To-morrow, Caroline, who had been to her what one sister of two is to another, would have left the house for ever. Her cousin, who—she could not hide it from herself—was far dearer to her than brother or sister—would, in a few days at most, have gone in search of more congenial surroundings, and who could tell when she might see him again? The old house would be duller, now, than ever it had been. Her mother was still inconsolable for the loss of her favourite; and her father seemed still well-nigh crushed by the blow which Dick's misconduct had inflicted. Her own duty lay plain before her. She must do all she might to help her parents in their grief. She must not add to their sorrow by showing any sign of despondency.

She would do her best to brighten their lives; but she had to confess that her own life would henceforth be hopelessly vapid and dreary. It now appeared as if Shawkirk must be for her the world; and life at Shawkirk had of late seemed narrower and bleaker than ever. It only took light and colour on the days when Arthur Lynn was among them.—There had for long been an aching pain at her heart; and she felt at the moment as if it would henceforth be more than she could bear. Then she humbled herself. What right had she to be discontented with her lot—to dream foolish dreams? And on the eve of Caroline's marriage, was it not wicked of her to yield to such selfish sadness, when she ought to be happy in her sister's happiness? This was her world, and she must go through it with a brave spirit and a smiling face.—Nevertheless, as she gazed down the valley, her eyes filled with tears.

Lynn's reflections, meanwhile, were of a somewhat different cast. He had asked Gertrude to walk with him that evening—

he had led their steps, of all places, to the Factory of the Past—designing to tell her of his love. But now, when the moment for speaking had come, he shrank from requiring the answer that must decide his future.

He could scarcely account for his own hesitation. He had been conscious of no such shrinking, in making his declaration to Camilla Arden. With her, he had been swept away by a torrent of passion in which thought had scarcely mingled. That passion, when he had allowed himself to think of it with any calmness, he had owned to be at war with the serious purpose of his life. But it had been so strangely sweet, so potent in its witchery, that even the sacrifice of his highest aims had seemed a cheap price to pay for its joys, however transient and illusive. But the glamour had faded. He was a stronger man now, and his love was a stronger love. That very power over it of which he was conscious —the power to control its expression—assured him that there was a depth, an abidingness in

his affection for Gertrude, which had been wanting in that passion of his romantic days.

It seemed to him now as if his love for Gertrude had been an undercurrent flowing without interruption through his whole life—a thing so much a part of himself that he had been scarce able to realise it. But of late, since he had been separated from her, he had come to realise it. Of late, her image had been constantly with him. The thought that her heart might be given to another had pained him, with a dull sense of pain; that moment of mistake, in which he had seen her set for ever beyond his reach, had revealed to him, as it were in a flash, the force and intensity of his love for her.

He knew now that all along he had been mistaken; that her heart had been given, if not to him, at least to no other; and yet he almost feared to speak. She, if she loved him now, must have loved him always. But he!—he could not offer her a virgin heart. If she loved him—then he had been untrue to her. If she did not love him, what would his life

be worth? His love for her, he felt, was inwoven with his most earnest thoughts, his strongest purposes, his highest hopes. If it must perish, could these endure?

"Gertrude," he said at last, "when I was in London — before I went abroad—I saw Camilla Arden."

Gertrude started, and turned towards him. His face was averted from her, so that she could not see its expression; but she thought from the tone of his voice that he was forcing himself to say what he would rather have left unsaid—what he was almost ashamed to say. In her highly-wrought state of feeling, this abrupt mention of Camilla Arden's name was like a sting to her. The fire of woman's jealousy, though but a flash that passed as quickly as it came, dried the tears that had gathered in her eyes, and lent her for the moment an almost feverish energy of voice and gesture.

"I thought so!" she said. "I was sure of it, when you came back so happy, and so—so like what you used to be. . . . . And you

forgave her! Oh, she must love you! She cannot but love you now! . . . And now, at last, you will be happy—happy with her after all!"

She spoke with tremulous eagerness; her hands were clasped tightly together; her grey eyes seemed to darken and dilate with new light. The thought of what this excitement might betoken filled Lynn with a sudden humiliation. He felt, as he had never felt before, the unworthiness of all he could offer in exchange for Gertrude's love. The very strength of his love for her impelled him to lay bare—even to unconsciously magnify—his own weakness and blindness in the past.

"Gertrude," he said, "you are strangely mistaken. I did forgive Camilla Arden, but at the same time I bade her farewell for ever. —I do not know that I have a right to speak of forgiving. When I look back on it all, I feel that I, at least, have no right to reproach her. At Leipsic, I told myself again and again that I was following a path that could never lead to happiness. In London, it was

the same. I never felt *sure* of her, even in the days when I thought I could not live without seeing her. I tormented myself, and her, with my doubts—I could never believe in a happy end to it all—sometimes I even felt afraid of what might befall us both, if she ever did become mine. . . . . You know the whole story. No doubt, she was to blame; but it is not for me to blame her—I myself am not free from reproach. I should have known—certainly I should have known!— . . . . I have been very blind—very blind and very foolish. I want you to know that I am at least aware how weak I have been —because—because I love you as I never loved before. It seems to me now as if I must have loved you always. Yes, I have come to my senses at last. That is the thing I wanted to say to you—I brought you here that I might say it. Tell me, Gertrude—it is not too late?"

She did not speak; he could not see her face. But he saw that she made a slight, impulsive movement towards him; he caught

her hands, and drawing her closer to him, looked into her eyes.

"Gertrude," he said, "you are crying! My own—my dearest! Now, indeed, you are mine!"

"I have always been yours, Arthur," she whispered; and next moment he had taken her into his arms, and strained her to his heart.

And thus the affection that had taken root in the dawn of their lives, that had strengthened with the years and made fragrant the chambers of the past—about which clustered so many memories of sisterly tenderness, of eager sympathy, of shy solicitude—was crowned at last with the magical flower around which 'all the muses sing.'

THE END.

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